Citizens or Subjects? A study of the political culture of students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College

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Abstract

The youth are a group of particular importance in politics because they represent the future leaders and voters. To investigate the political culture of students at Howard College a representative sample of students was drawn, and a questionnaire administered. This questionnaire had two parts. The first part tested students' knowledge of the political system in South Africa and the second part measured their attitudes and feelings toward politics and government. The design of the questionnaire was influenced by the functionalist approach to the study of political systems used by Almond and Powell (1978). The questions asked were divided into three different categories to correspond to each level of the political system in the model, which consists of a system, process, and a policy level. It was found that students at Howard College were under-informed but not uninformed about the South African political system, despite failing the test that was administered. In was found that students had a generally negative attitude toward the people in charge of government, were apathetic toward voting and had low levels of trust in public officials. The findings of the research were that the youth need some kind of civic education to prepare them for their future role as citizens. And that more needs to be done to bring the youth into the fold to gain their support.

Acknowledgements

DECLARATION - PLAGIARISM

I, …………Jiovaan Chetty………………………….………………………., declare that

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

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a. Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced
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Signed
J. Chetty……………………………………………………………………

Acronyms

ANC: African National Congress

COSATU: Congress of South African Trade Unions

DA: Democratic Alliance

EFF: Economic Freedom Fighters

IEC: Independent Electoral Commission

IFP: Inkatha Freedom Party

SACP: South African Communist Party

SADC: Southern African Development Community

SAHRC: South African Human Rights Commission

UN: United Nations

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

I was first introduced to the idea of political culture as an undergraduate student. I encountered the concept as part of a course on political communication through Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba's landmark work on the subject, *The Civic Culture*. I became interested in it for two reasons. The first reason was what I found to be the incredible breadth of the study. It was a cross-national comparison of the political cultures of four different countries[1]. The second reason that I became interested in political culture was because this concept provided a useful and thought-provoking framework within which to describe the relationship between citizens and their government.

The factors that can be used to describe the complex relationship between citizens and government are diverse, but what Almond and Verba (1956) did was to condense these into two main things. The first was what citizens know and understand about politics and their political system. The second was their attitudes and feelings toward politics and government. The simplicity of this approach appealed to me, as well as its explanatory power. In my fourth year of study, I adapted the framework employed by Almond and Verba (1956) (in *The Civic Culture)* to provide the basis for a study of my own, into the political culture of students at Howard College, where I myself was a student. I wanted to understand the political culture of other students there because it had occurred to me that young people like myself were the next best hope for the country, and represented a new generation of voters.

I built on the study I conducted in 2010 for my Honours thesis to develop a more nuanced approach to the political culture of youth at Howard College after I enrolled for an MA in political science. I expanded the theoretical framework I used to include the work done by Almond and Powell (1978) in *Comparative Politics: System, Process, and Policy* and applied a functionalist approach to the project, that I will describe later in chapter two which deals with the theoretical framework. I

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[1]   Britain, Italy, Mexico and the USA.

decided to use a combination of methods to gather the data, which included a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with students. But due to poor response from students, who showed a reluctance to get involved and participate, I was ultimately restricted to what I could gather from the questionnaires that I distributed. However the insight gained from the questionnaires alone was more than sufficient to describe the political culture of youth at Howard College.

My first aim was to find out how much students at Howard College knew about politics in South Africa. The method I used to measure this was to administer a questionnaire to a representative sample of the student population, the first section of which comprised a list of twelve questions relating to politics in South Africa. The functionalist approach I adopted (which I will discuss further in chapter two) influenced the boundaries of what I did and did not ask. I divided the political system into three distinct yet interrelated levels: a System level, a Process level and a Policy level. Then I designed a set of four questions that related to each one. The use of a functionalist approach helped me focus on particular areas and functions of the political system and narrow the range of relevant questions I could ask. Almond and Powell (1978) had defined the objects of each level and I used these descriptions as themes to design questions around. I used a number of different question types, including multiple choice, true and false, and open ended in order to create a test format that respondents would not find tired and repetitive.

My second aim was to measure the attitudes and feelings of students at Howard College toward politics and government in South Africa. I used the same questionnaire mentioned above to ask questions in a second section (Section B) about, for example, students' opinions of the performance of the ministers in charge of national government. The design of this section was again influenced by the functionalist approach I mentioned earlier. This approach could be criticised as dated, but I found it useful to help me define what I would and would not ask. The danger of a project of this

nature is admitting too many variables and factors to the study, which will result in too broad a project. On the other hand, I did not want to narrow my focus so far that the results I obtained were of limited use. The utility of the functionalist approach was that it defined the different levels of the political system as well as their boundaries. This helped to decide what to include and what to exclude when I designed the questions I used.

It was important for me to include questions about the people in charge of the political system, and to find out what young South Africans thought about voting. The answers to each question I asked had important implications for the political culture. This research was motivated first by the desire to know what other young South Africans, people like me, thought about politics. I wanted to know if other students where I studied at Howard College had the same feelings about government and governance as I did. But I was also aware that the ideas I would have would differ from others to a certain degree because I had majored in political science and had a different grasp of politics to others who had not. The interest I had was not idle. It was also based on the knowledge that the youth represent a powerful voting bloc. The implications of what the youth know and feel about politics now has ramifications for their actions in the future.

To understand the background to this study one must first be acquainted with the history of politics and political participation in South Africa. It is impossible to understand the reasons for how people feel, think and act in the present without a knowledge of the prior events and experiences which lead to the present condition. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to the most important elements which comprise the background and context of this study. I will expand on these elements in subsequent chapters such as the literature review and theoretical framework.

In this chapter I will introduce four main topics. The first topic is the history of politics and political

participation in South Africa. It is impossible to be an effective political scientist without a knowledge of history for two reasons. The first reason is that the events of the past represent legacies that influence the present. The second reason is my personal belief that history does repeat itself and if one is familiar with the past then it is possible to read in unfolding events what will soon come to pass. In the next chapter, as part of the review I conducted on the existing literature of political culture scholarship, I discussed the history of politics in South Africa. This discussion showed that in the past one of the hallmarks of the political culture of South Africa was repression. The apartheid regime did not tolerate dissent and did not hesitate to crack down on it. A wonderful contrast to this is how post-1994 an interest group called the Treatment Action Campaign were able to voice their opposition to how the government was dealing with HIV/AIDS. This point of contrast is meant to illustrate how in the past dissent was not encouraged and would not have been tolerated, but in the present there are mechanisms that are part of the political system itself which enable private citizens and public interest groups to hold the government to account. But it remains a question whether or not this transformed the political culture of ordinary citizens and whether or not this even registers in the consciousness of youth. The limits on the length of this dissertation constrain the number of historical comparisons I can draw to illustrate the changes in the South African political landscape, but the scope of the literature review will suffice to show the new and different context that has emerged.

However this landscape is no political utopia. The second topic I will deal with is corruption. This is an almost endemic part of the system and I show that this has affected how South African youth think of politics and the South African political system and process. The rampant corruption in government at each level is a blight on the political landscape of South Africa and for this reason is an important part of the context and background of this study of youth political culture in particular. It is the perceptions of the youth, who represent the future electorate, that will determine the course of future polls and who fills the benches in parliament. In the chapter that deals with youth attitudes

and feelings toward politics I discuss the effects of corruption on youth perception in greater detail. The purpose of mentioning it here first is to establish it as an important part of the context and background and place it at the fore of the reader's attention as he engages with the points that are raised.

The third topic that I deal with is race. Apartheid made race matter. The end of apartheid has erased race as as a legal means for discrimination (claims against BEE notwithstanding) but it continues to be a part of how people think. It is an important part of the context and background of this study for the value that youth continue to imbue it with. I did not ask questions specific to race but I did stratify the results obtained by race and observed that the responses to some questions did not fail to cite race as a factor.

The fourth topic that is important to understanding the background to this study is political participation. In the past there were laws that decided who could participate in politics – who could vote and run for office. Now no such legal impediments exist. But voter turnout, and youth voter turnout in particular, remains low. This means that despite being enfranchised, the youth still do not feel like voting. An important reason that I chose to focus on the political culture of youth in particular and not adult citizens in general was because the youth represent the future electorate. But if this trend of disinterest in voting continues then it will be reproduced at the polls in the future when the current generation has replaced older adults who still remember what it was like during Apartheid.

In this chapter I identified four important topics which I believe provide a meaningful context and background to the issues I discuss in subsequent chapters. I have provided a brief introduction to each which I will expand on later when they become relevant to the questions and results under discussion.

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. The first chapter after the introduction is the Literature Review and to begin with, it will deal with the debate over the meaning of political culture. I found the definition of political culture adopted by Almond and Verba (1956) useful and interesting to begin with, but still weighed its power for explanation against other definitions in the literature on the topic. The second part of the Literature Review will discuss the history of politics in South Africa, and South African political culture in particular, in order to locate the objectives of the study I undertook in the correct context. Further to creating the right context, this chapter also defines the category of 'the youth' and provides an overview of the literature on the political culture of this group.

The third chapter of this dissertation sets out the Theoretical Framework. It describes the theories and concepts that I used to build the framework of political culture which I adopted. The theoretical framework that I adopted blended a functionalist approach to the study of politics with the typology of political culture types described in *The Civic Culture*. This chapter will describe how I related the two approaches and made them work together.

The fourth chapter outlines the Research Design. In the preceding chapter I would have described the key theories that underpinned the research project. In this chapter I describe how those theories guided the design of the project and influenced the research methodologies that were used.

The fifth and sixth chapters deal with the findings I obtained. In chapter four I describe and explain the results of the test of knowledge I administered in the first part of the questionnaire. The reason that Almond and Verba (1956) attached so much importance to knowledge of politics as a component of the political culture was because the information that one has to go on is what guides

one's actions. I found that the information that students at Howard College had about their political system was incomplete, and in some cases, erroneous. I delve deeper into the implications of this in chapter four and then later in chapter seven, where I recapitulate the findings as a whole.

In chapter six I describe, among other things, what students at Howard College had to say about the people in charge of government, their attitudes toward voting, and expectations for equal treatment by public officials. The findings discussed in this chapter were perhaps the most interesting, for the insight they reveal into the minds of future leaders and voters. Interestingly, I found a high level of voter apathy, and that a large percentage of students had negative things to say about the government and how it was run. In this chapter I attempt to show a relationship between voter apathy among the youth and their perceptions of the government.

No discussion of politics which aims to describe the relationship between citizens and the state is complete without talking about *what citizens want*. Citizens vote because on a mundane level it helps to select the next government – but on another level, their votes are bound up in desire. Their desires for themselves and the future are exploited during campaigning by political parties and are reflected in the policies that they support. In chapter six I describe the views of young South Africans on the biggest challenges they believed were facing the country in order to find out what were their major needs.

In the final chapter, chapter seven, I summarise the findings I made and provide an overview of the implications inherent for future youth political participation. The implications are dire, but not apocalyptic, and reveal areas for concern that need to be dealt with in the present to secure the future of South Africa's young democracy.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The concept of political culture is complex. It refers to the relationship between politics and culture. There are many different definitions of political culture, each of which brings something useful to the table, but there is no one definition that has achieved hegemonic status in the literature. One definition came close for a period that began in the 1950s when 'modernization theory' was at its height, with the publication of *The Civic Culture* by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba. However even this definition, and the model of political culture associated with it, was gradually replaced as academics began to ask different questions, challenge the assumptions built into the model, and publish new findings. The purpose of the first part of this chapter is to attempt to define the concept of political culture and explain the relationship between politics and culture. The sections that follow will discuss the history of politics in South Africa, and South African political culture.

The focus of this research is on the political culture of the youth. I chose to investigate the political culture of this group in particular because it can provide insight about the next generation of leaders and voters. In the second part of this chapter I will define the category of 'the youth' and provide an overview of the literature on the political culture of this group.

The Meaning of Political Culture

There are two broad approaches to defining political culture that I identified during my research. The first approach consists of defining politics and culture and linking them together. Examples of this approach include Nesbitt-Larking (1992), Pye (1991) and Moody (1994). The second approach involves the application of an all-inclusive explanation which defines the parameters of political culture. Examples of this approach include Elkins and Simeon (1979), Patterson (1968) and

Pateman (1971) among others. In this section of the chapter I will discuss examples of each approach to provide an overview of the ways in which the concept of political culture has come to be defined.

The first approach consists of defining politics and culture and linking them together. This requires the researcher to choose a definition of politics and a definition of culture. In his explanation of the concept, Nesbitt-Larking (1992: 80) chose to define politics as power and described it in terms of the different practices of power that emerge when people start to make decisions and allocate resources. For his definition of culture he chose "a social achievement in which people create and transmit meaning" which is based on "symbolic resources such as words, texts, actions, gestures and artifacts" Nesbitt-Larking (1992: 81). Based on these definitions he was able to conclude that:

> Political cultures happen as people, operating in an already existing symbolic field of cultural concepts and practices, convey to each other conceptions of the distribution and uses of valued resources and the making of decisions and rules (Nesbitt-Larking: 1992: 4).

In this example Nesbitt-Larking (1992) chose to define politics in terms of the practices of power. This is a valid definition but it is not the only one that exists. The same is true of his definition of culture. The meanings of both of these concepts are highly contested within the social sciences and this means that there is a broad range of definitions from which to choose. For example Heywood (2002: 5) identified four views of politics and these provide categories within which we can locate common definitions of the word. These categories refer to: politics as the art of government, politics as public affairs, politics as compromise and consensus, and politics as power Heywood (2002: 5). This equates to four approaches to defining politics and for each one of these approaches I have found that it is possible to provide at least one different definition of culture, if not more. For

examples see Munger (2006), Polletta (2008) and Saguy and Stuart (2008). This shows that there is a wide range of definitions to choose from and it means that a researcher will have to choose the definitions he uses with care. There is of course no "right" or "wrong" definition of politics or culture. Each one has its own merits. But by using the approach discussed here a researcher can construct either a very broad or a narrow definition of political culture depending on how he chooses to define politics and culture. The advantage of this approach is that it allows you to tailor the definition to focus on the factors and processes that you think are important as long as you can find the definitions to support them. However, if you go too broad you risk admitting too many characteristics to your definition for it to be useful; and if you go too narrow you could omit something important.

The second approach involves the application of an all-inclusive explanation which defines the parameters of political culture. This is the more common approach and the one that I adopted. My discussion of this approach will overlap with my review of the literature on political culture in general. Then I will explain the definition of political culture that I chose.

Patterson writing in 1968 recognised that at the time there was "very little data on the characteristics of political culture within American states" Patterson (1968: 195). By political culture he meant beliefs, symbols and values shared among a people that provide the foundation for the political system and their political relationships Patterson (1968: 188-189). The dearth of data on the political culture of American states was important because without that information it was not possible to describe or compare the political culture of different states. It is important to understand political culture because of the influence it exerts on the process of interest articulation. In a democracy there is a process in which demands are articulated by the people, which Patterson (1968: 190) refers to as "demand inputs". These demands go through a process of "want

conversion" which is nothing more or less than placing them on the agenda of legislators who will deliberate over which demands will be realised through system outputs in the form of laws and policies. According to Patterson (1968: 190) the political culture will regulate the want conversion process and affect "the frequency, intensity, and quality of demand input" because the values and beliefs upon which it is derived will influence which demands arise, the manner in which the demands are articulated, and the success of the effort. The purpose of Patterson's study was to describe and explain some of the key points on which the political culture of states could differ. He concluded that ways of holding and applying beliefs and political socialization were areas where the political culture of states could differ, among others.

Moody (1994) focuses on the meaning of culture and cultural analysis in his explanation of political culture. He takes the position that "politics and political institutions are part of culture" and should be studied as such Moody (1994: 732) because of the relationship between politics and culture. The relationship between politics and culture is two-fold. First, politics is conditioned by culture; and second, "politics can work to preserve or change the larger culture" Moody (1994: 732). The focus of this paper was China Studies, and the application of a cultural analysis to Chinese politics in order to describe the political culture of that nation. This analysis was influenced by modernization theory and the premise "that technological change could help generate modernizing mentalities, while traditional mentalities could inhibit modernizing technical change" Moody (1994: 731). The conclusion of the paper was that "Chinese politics cannot be understood separately from culture" Moody (1994: 731) and this was supported by examples of aspects of Chinese politics that are better understood when explained with reference to culture.

Hernandez Martinez interpreted the character of the political culture being consolidated at the time in the United States as part of a move "to regain the country's lost hegemony and legitimize

domestic policy" Hernandez Martinez (2007: 46). He drew on the work of Almond and Verba (1980) and Pye (1971) to define political culture in terms of "the synthesis of trends, conventions, and relatively stable values that characterise the relationships between various social groups and political power, conditioning the political development of the society as a whole" Hernandez Martinez (2007: 47). The purpose of this paper was to show how the political culture of the United States has been used to gain support for and legitimate state policies. The notion of national security for example, was cited as a feature of both political discourse and the political culture that was used to legitimate the passage of the Patriot Act in 2001.

The discussion thus far has shown that the concept of political culture is fluid. There is no right or wrong set of processes or activities, of symbols and beliefs, or individuals and groups that one can cast in stone as the objects of political culture. Now I will present the definition of political culture that I chose. I have combined multiple definitions of political culture to create the theoretical framework that underpins this project. The discussion that follows is meant to describe how I derived the definition that I adopted.

I read many definitions of political culture but the following was the catalyst. Elkins and Simeon (1979: 23) described political culture as nothing more or less than the dominant set of assumptions and premises about the political world that is shared by a collective, for example a nation or region; and this definition got me thinking. I began to search for a framework that would help me describe the assumptions and premises described by them. A second point guided my search. Elkins and Simeon (1979: 22 – 23) added that assumptions about the political world will affect how members of a group feel and act toward politics and define a range of acceptable possible alternatives from which a course of action can be chosen; but it cannot explain the choice of one alternative over another. It occurred to me that a useful way to describe how members of a group will feel and act

toward politics would be in relation to the political system itself.

I wanted to learn about the assumptions that underpin how the youth feel and act toward politics as represented by the political system. To do this it became necessary to divide the political system into different parts to make it easier to understand the activities and role players associated with each. It was a process analogous to taking a watch apart to see how it works. Almond and Powell (1978) proposed a way to divide the political system into three parts to study political culture. This approach is functionalist and based on the assumption by Almond and Powell (1978) that political culture is a divisible set of orientations toward the various structures and aspects of the political system.

I found this approach useful because it helped to define the range of actors and processes that I had to focus on. A democratic political system can be separated into the following levels: a system level, a process level and a policy level Almond and Powell (1978). The objects of the system level are the state and the government. The process level is concerned with the political process itself. The objects of this level are citizens and groups such as political parties and interest groups. Finally, the policy level is concerned with the internal and external policies of the state. Even if the people in a political system do not evaluate the system in these terms they are aware of the activities and processes related to them, "have feelings toward them, and judge or evaluate them according to various norms" Almond (1990: 17). The content of these feelings, judgments and evaluations constitute a set of orientations which make it possible to refer to a system, process and policy culture.

This means that based on the aforementioned approach, political culture can be described as a divisible set of orientations toward the various structures and aspects of the political system Almond

and Powell (1978). An orientation has three components: *cognitive*, *affective* and *evaluative*; where each of these refers to, respectively, what an individual *knows, feels* and *thinks* about a given object Almond and Powell (1978: 26). The emphasis on knowledge as a component of political culture and a component of orientations toward politics is emphasised by Almond and Verba (1956) who defined knowledge of politics as one of the components of political culture.

It occurred to me that a useful way to describe the process culture of a political system would be in terms of the typology of political culture types proposed by Almond and Verba (1956). According to Almond and Verba (1956: 16) there are three types of political culture: *parochial, subject* and *participant*. Each type of political culture describes a particular way in which people can feel about the political system and behave in relation to it.

The Politics and Political Culture of South Africa

According to van Vuuren (2005: 87) "Political culture is not static, although its evolution is heavily influenced by history...". South Africa is a nascent democratic state with an authoritarian past and a history of racial segregation. These facts influence both the politics of the present and the political culture. In this section of the chapter I will discuss the politics and political culture of South Africa. This discussion will necessarily overlap because of the relationship between politics and political culture.

According to van Zyl Slabbert (2005: 41) "Political culture refers to the norms, values, standards and practices that have to do with the competition for abuse and use of power" where competition for power is explained in terms of how stability is maintained in a society. In a society where stability is maintained by repression, there is a repressive political culture; in a society where the political system is based on consent there is a democratic political culture. The political culture in

South Africa prior to 1994 then, given the state of emergency, the uses to which the military were put by the government, and the activities of the Special Branch, can be described as a massively repressive political culture.

According to van Vuuren (2005: 75) a "culture of secrecy, central control, venality and inequality" continues "to permeate (although not dominate) our political culture". The culture of secrecy and control which he speaks of refers to the culture of secrecy which liberation movements were forced to operate under. According to van Vuuren (2005: 80) "large parts of the liberation movements (particularly those outside the country) had been forced to develop a culture of secrecy" in order to survive "in the wake of assassinations and infiltrations by state agents". And the aspect of central control can refer to the current institutional structure which under the system of proportional representation can allow a single party to dominate the benches in parliament.

According to Moodey (2006: 108) in terms of political culture and elections:

> ...one is seen as betraying the struggle if one does not vote for or support the ANC. Owing to this, the masses would rather refrain from going to the polls (a number of speakers have today pointed out the declining voter turnout) than vote for an opposition party.

This means that loyalty to the ruling ANC and gratitude to them for their role in the liberation struggle appears to be an entrenched feature of the political culture for a significant section of the electorate. According to Buthelezi (2005: 104):

> Paradoxically, the majority of ANC supporters remain poor; and yet the 2004 election results reveal that they seem to offer solidarity-based support for the ANC government (despite a

sharp decline of over a million votes cast for the ruling party) based upon the ANC's liberation credentials, as they define them. This is contributing to the unhealthy solidification of our political culture.

The implications of this for stable democracy are uncertain. Under a traditional cycle of regime change, where leaders and parties in charge of government are replaced over time as support for them wavers based their performance and the popularity of their policies, one would predict that the ANC will one day lose its majority and be replaced by an opposition party. However, given that support for them appears to be an entrenched feature of the political culture, regime change is in doubt. According to Moodey (2006: 108) "There is a notion in the ANC that they are too powerful to be defeated, and the fact that voters are not punishing them at the polls only reinforces this notion".

According to Hutamo (2006: 110) a culture of careerism has begun to permeate politics and influence participation in politics and community affairs. The pattern is of community leaders being co-opted by the ruling party with the promise of profit. According to Hutamo (2006: 110) "community leaders are often being singled out by the ruling party and are elevated by, for example, becoming councillors, being granted tenders or being given other such opportunities". This means that people with the potential to be strong leaders are in effect being neutralised as possible threats to the ruling party by being recruited to their ranks with the promise of personal advancement at the expense of the community. In an ideal world, people would get involved in politics out of a desire to serve, instead people are learning from example that participation equals profit. According to Hutamo (2006: 111) "We are going to have a culture on the ground where people who join the youth leagues are motivated not by altruism or nation building, but because they are promised opportunities for joining such organisations".

An example of a study on the political culture of South Africa is the one conducted by Afrobarometer in 2004. According to [2]Chikwanha (2005: 17) the study found that the political culture of South Africa was "an adversarial culture due to distrust of authority and mistrust in government" and that the least trusted institutions were "the opposition political parties, followed by the police and then local councils" Chikwanha (2005: 9). In terms of national identity, according to Chikwanha (2005: 8) "The number of citizens who say they are proud to be called South African has over the period 1995 to 2004 declined steadily from over 90% to 82%". The sentiment that a united South Africa is both possible and desirable has remained constant but the proportion of people identifying with it is in flux. According to Chikwanha (2005: 1) the key elements of the political culture in South Africa "are liberty, equality and democracy". South Africans have "developed a culture of commitment towards democracy by consistently rejecting authoritarian rule" Chikwanha (2005: 3) and people on the whole are satisfied with the way that democracy works in South Africa Chikwanha (2005: 3). The level of trust in institutions is fair but there is minimal use of these institutions and the least trusted are "the opposition political parties, followed by the police and then local councils" Chikwanha (2005: 9). According to Chikwanha (2005: 12) citizens do not spend much time in associational activities, but most of them do agree that they should question actively the actions of their leaders. Other characteristics of the South African political culture were political tolerance, a stress on the value of equality and a commitment to participation through voting Chikwanha (2005). However it should be noted that this study by Afrobarometer was in effect a snap shot of the political culture at the time, and that over time political culture can change to reflect new developments in the political system.

Under apartheid, race played a key role in politics and determined whether an individual was recognised a citizen of South Africa or one of the bantustans or homelands. Race featured

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[2]   Annie Chikwanha is a member of the Afrobarometer Network PP team.

prominently in the political discourse of the day and was a key determinant of privilege and power. After the first democratic elections white minority rule was replaced by black majority rule, but little has changed in terms of the position occupied by race in politics. This is because it still continues to be invoked by ordinary people and politicians to justify or explain situations and actions, thus continuing to polarise society along racial lines on social and political issues. One example of a situation in which race has featured negatively in public discourse was the debate over the depiction of President Jacob Zuma in a painting with his genitals exposed in 2012. This painting was branded as racist by the ANC who mobilised its supporters to protest against it. When the painting was vandalised, this was justified by certain people on the street on the grounds that the painting was racist. The polarising effect of the debate over this painting was such that President Zuma declared the necessity for a summit on nation building and social cohesion.

The Youth

The focus of this research is on the political culture of the youth. I chose to investigate the political culture of this group in particular because it can provide insight about the next generation of leaders and voters. In this part of the chapter I will define the category of 'the youth' and provide an overview of the literature on the political culture of this group.

South Africa has a very young population. According to Statistics South Africa (2010) more than half of the population is below the age of twenty-four. Definitions of 'the youth' vary between organisations, but the United Nations and the World Bank both define this group as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. For the purposes of this study I decided to set the minimum age at eighteen and keep the maximum age unchanged. This was because:

> For most citizens, the process of becoming politically active (or inactive) begins in early
>
> adulthood when people initially become eligible to vote, join political parties, and engage in

adult civic organisations McFarland and Thomas (2006: 401).

In South Africa, the period in which people gain the ability to vote and engage in adult political activity is in their late teens, at age eighteen. I wanted to investigate attitudes toward voting since this is a part of political culture, and to do this, potential respondents had to be eligible to vote.

There have been many studies of political culture, but few that have focused specifically on the youth. Instead, the work done has tended to focus on civic education and political participation. These are both related to political culture but on their own are simply pieces of the larger puzzle.

Almond and Verba (1956) identified knowledge of politics as one of two components of political culture. In some countries high school students are taught about politics and government in civics classes. In South Africa civic education is not part of the public school curriculum, but through a USAID-sponsored programme called *Democracy for All* students in some high schools are being taught about citizen participation in democratic politics Brilliant (2000) cited in Ernst and Finkel (2005: 335). Ernst and Finkel (2005) used this programme to evaluate the impact of democratic civic education on South African high school students. The study focused on the effect of civic education on political knowledge and democratic values and skills. The findings showed that civics classes had "substantial effects on students' basic political knowledge" Ernst and Finkel (2005: 358). The effects of civic education on democratic values and skills were weaker but it was found that this could be remedied by using instructors who were competent and likeable and by adopting "interactive and participatory teaching methods" Ernst and Finkel (2005: 358).

The youth represent the next generation of voters and for this reason it is important to understand the factors in adolescence that influence political participation as adults. McFarland and Thomas

(2006) took up this task in their study of how youth voluntary associations influence adult political participation. The findings showed that American youth who engaged in extra-curricular activities acquired a greater dimension of civic competence and were predisposed to civic participation.

As future voters it is important to understand what the youth think about voting and what influences their ballot. It is reasonable to expect that in South Africa, because of apartheid, race continues to be a factor that shapes people's opinions on politics. Even the opinions of young people. However, in a study of the voting behaviour of students at Howard College, Botes (2010: 1) found that "race plays a minor role in informing voting behaviour".

There are compelling reasons to study the political culture of youth in general, and African youth in particular. One of these reasons is that "the median age of Africans is 19 years compared with 42 years for Europeans (UN-DESA 2010), and the youth currently comprise 70 per cent of the region's population" Resnick and Casale (2011: 1). Simply put, it is important to study the political culture of this group because it constitutes such a large part of the population. However, the study by Resnick and Casale (2011) focused on the political participation of African youth, which is only one component of political culture. The study compared data from nineteen countries to make conclusions about voter turnout, partisanship and participation in protest action. The findings in general were that "the youth vote less and are more likely to demonstrate no partisanship or an attachment to opposition parties rather than any affinity to incumbent parties" Resnick and Casale (2011: 2). With regard to participation in protest action, it was found that "higher levels of education and economic deprivation, as well as a lack of satisfaction with democracy, increase the likelihood that the youth will protest" Resnick and Casale (2011: 2).

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

In the preceding chapter I explained the process of reasoning that helped me build the definition of political culture that I adopted. In this chapter I will expand on that discussion to explain the theories that I adapted to study the political culture of students at Howard College. This chapter will be divided into three sections to reflect the tripartite character of political culture that is unique to the functionalist approach I adopted. There are three levels of political culture: a system level, a process level and a policy level Almond and Powell (1978). In the corresponding sections I will identify the objects of analysis for each level, and show how I studied orientations toward these objects by breaking down an individual orientation into three components: cognitive, affective and evaluative. The cognitive component refers to an individual's knowledge of "the working of the political system, its leading figures, and the current policy problems" Almond and Powell (1978: 26). The affective and evaluative components refer to an individual's feelings toward, and moral evaluation of, the system respectively Almond and Powell (1978: 26).

System Culture

The objects that represent the system level are the political authorities, the regime and the nation. By political authorities Almond and Powell (1978: 34) meant "those individuals who occupy roles in the regime at any one time". This refers to the people who work in government and can include both political appointees and civil servants. The regime is taken to refer to "the set of structures performing the political functions and the norms governing their performance" Almond and Powell (1978: 34). This is a description of the state apparatus which consists of government departments and agencies. The final object is the nation and this refers to "the problem of national identity" Almond and Powell (1978: 33). The "problem" referred to is whether or not people feel a sense of loyalty to the state.

Cognitive Component

Almond and Verba (1956: 57) defined a knowledge of politics as one of the two components of political culture. This is because accurate information is the foundation of good decision- making. If people expect to influence politics then accurate information about political issues and processes is a logical prerequisite Almond and Verba (1956: 57). At the system level in particular, this relates to knowledge about the state; its structures, and the individuals who occupy positions within it.

When Almond and Verba (1956) tested how much the citizens of five countries knew about politics and government, the questions related to the system and process levels. People were first asked to name the national leaders of the principal parties in their country, and then to name cabinet offices or departments at the national level of government. My own study went further. In a self- administered questionnaire, instead of asking students to name a department at the national level of government, it asked them to name the ministers in charge of three key portfolios. This was a better test because it required people to draw on their knowledge of the people in charge. I would contend that asking people to give the names of government departments is an easy question that does not really test their knowledge of government, since a correct answer can be arrived at based on a combination of logic and guesswork even if they do not follow public affairs in the media. In addition to asking individuals to identify the national leaders of the principal parties in the country, they were also asked if they could name their local ward councillor. Only someone who has voted in elections for local government, has had interaction with their councillor, or simply makes it a point to be informed about what is happening in the place where they live, will be able to answer this question. In an open- ended question, individuals were asked to explain what they thought the state President's job entails. As head of state and government, the President of the Republic is a key figure. I wanted to find out if people have the right idea about what his role and duties entail.

Almond and Powell (1973: 34) stress the distinction between the regime and the political authorities. In effect, between the state apparatus and the individuals who occupy positions in it. What Almond and Powell (1973: 34) refer to as the regime is conceptually the state. According to Heywood (2002: 26) regime is a term that can refer to "the mechanisms of government and the institutions of the state". This definition is similar to the one used by Almond and Powell (1978: 34) and in practice both refer to the institutional structure, to the different departments and agencies that perform particular functions in the running of the country. In South Africa for example, the department of Home Affairs and the Social Security Agency. The political authorities are the individuals who occupy positions in these state departments and agencies. This can include both political appointees and civil servants. Almond and Powell (1973: 34) consider it important to distinguish between the institutional structure of the state, and the authorities or people in charge of it. In practice, the body that is in charge of the state is the government. And the distinction between the regime and the political authorities is here construed to equate to the distinction between state and government.

It is important that individuals are able to make this distinction for several reasons. The first reason is that the state and the government are two distinct yet interrelated entities. The state represents the interests of all the people of the land. But the government is represented by a political party that has been elected to power through a majority vote. The state is fixed but the government that is in charge of running it can be replaced in the next election. It is possible for the boundaries between state and government to blur over time in the minds of the people. An example of this is the ANC's policy of cadre deployment, where politically connected party members are appointed to positions within the state on the basis of their loyalty rather than competence. This study assessed whether or not individuals were able to differentiate between state and government based on their ability to

correctly identify the different roles and duties associated with state and government.

Affective Component

I determined what individuals felt about the system by asking them questions about the performance of ministers in charge of government and the kind of treatment that they would expect to receive in a government office. Almond and Verba (1956: 68) took the position that the feelings that people have toward government authorities may be inferred from their expectations of how they will be treated by them. It follows that when people expect that they will not be given fair and considerate treatment by government authorities this indicates that they are unfavourably disposed toward them and by association, with the political system itself.

One of the objects that represents the system level is the nation. When we consider an individual's feelings toward the nation, we consider the issue of national identity. According to Almond and Powell (1978: 33) "The political community is the whole group of individuals who are bound together into a common political process...the problem of support for the political community is often called the problem of national identity". To find out how closely young South Africans identified with the nation, the question, "Are you proud to be called a South African?" was posed in the self-administered questionnaire. Respondents had the option of explaining the reason for their answer. The utility of this question was that it helped indicate how people felt toward the system as a whole.

Evaluative Component

Where the cognitive component is concerned with how much individuals know, and the affective with what they feel, the evaluative component of their orientations has to do with what they think

about the system in moral terms. At the system level this translates into the way that individuals evaluate the activities and performance of government. I found it difficult to draw a line between feelings and moral evaluation because in practice how you feel about an issue will affect your evaluation of your situation. That is the reason I have sought not to separate the two in my discussion of the results.

Process Culture

This level of the political culture is concerned with the political process. It is concerned with what people in a political system know, feel and think about themselves as actors in the political process, and other political groups such as parties and interest groups Almond (1990: 17).

My discussion here will draw on what I call the Almond/Verba model. The Almond/Verba model refers to the theory of political culture used by Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba in their comparative study of the political culture of five nations in the 1950s. The basis of this model is the claim that there are three types of political culture: parochial, subject and participant Almond and Verba (1956: 16). Each type of political culture describes a particular set of orientations toward the political system, and this typology of political culture types was used by Almond and Powell (1978: 34) to describe the process culture of political systems.

Each type of political culture describes a particular set of orientations toward the political system. This means that for each type, there will be a unique cognitive, affective and evaluative component. In each sub-section that follows I will begin by defining that particular type of political culture, and then discussing the cognitive, affective and evaluative components that represent it. The typology of political culture types is not applied here as pure types, in the sense that I intended to classify the process culture of students at Howard College as either parochial or subject or participant. Instead, I

set out to describe the distribution of characteristics related to each type in the population. An individual will display traits of each of these types to varying degrees and it is possible for one trait to dominate over the others.

Parochial Process Culture

In a parochial political culture, citizens have a limited awareness of government and its structures, and their feelings toward it are negative or uncertain Almond and Verba (1956: 17).

Cognitive Component

This component relates to how much knowledge the individual has about matters relating to the political process, and other political groups. Almond and Powell (1978: 35) found that "Parochials are those who have little or no awareness of the political system" and this means that the parochial is the least knowledgeable of the three types about matters relating to politics. Individuals with this orientation dominant will not be well informed about matters such as elections and electoral procedure or the activities of parties and interest groups. They might have difficulty identifying the leadership of the principal political parties. And will have little if any knowledge about the Constitution of the country.

Affective Component

This component relates to how the individual feels toward the political process, and other political groups. In a parochial political culture citizens have a limited awareness of government and its structures, and their feelings toward it are negative or uncertain Almond and Verba (1956: 16). This means that individuals with this orientation dominant will not be interested in politics and government. Such an individual is indifferent toward the political process. It does not interest him.

He might be aware that elections are going on, but have no desire to cast a vote. It has been observed that "Parochialism in more differentiated political systems is likely to be affective and normative rather than cognitive" Almond and Verba (1956: 16). This means that citizens are likely to be aware of the existence of political groups such as parties and interest groups, and elections, but not be interested in them. People for whom the parochial orientation is dominant do not feel like the government owes them anything, and do not spend time waiting for central government to improve their lot in life. If they expected anything in the beginning, they have given up. This is based on the claim by Almond and Verba (1956: 17) that "A parochial orientation also implies the comparative absence of expectations of change initiated by the political system. The parochial expects nothing from the political system".

Evaluative Component

This component relates to what people think about the political process. According to Almond and Powell (1978: 35) "Parochials are those who have little or no awareness of the political system. They have no perception of their possible influence of the political system". This means that that individuals with this orientation dominant will not attempt to influence the system because they do not understand how they can. Such an individual will not vote or try to join an interest group. These people do not participate in the political process. It was noted that "the general concept draws attention to those citizens whose lives are concerned with non-political events and who develop no sense of a relationship to the national political process" Almond and Powell (1978: 35). This means that people for whom the parochial orientation is dominant do not think about government and the political process much, if at all. These issues are of little concern to them. In general, it was found that "pure parochials are rare in economically developed nations with widespread literacy, penetrative mass media, and bureaucracies" but "remain a common feature of traditional and transitional societies" Almond and Powell (1978: 35).

Subject Process Culture

In the subject political culture, citizens do not see themselves as participants in the political process but rather as subjects of the government Hague and Harrop (2001: 79).

Cognitive component

This component relates to how much knowledge the individual has about matters relating to the political process, and other political groups. It is my hypothesis that individuals with this orientation dominant will be better informed about matters such as elections and the leadership of political parties than individuals who are dominantly parochial. This is because "Subjects are those citizens who become part of the national political system and perceive its impact, or potential impact, on their lives" Almond and Powell (1978: 35). Of importance here is that subjects are those citizens who perceive the impact of the national political system because this implies an awareness of (a cognitive orientation, if you will) toward the political process. According to Almond and Verba (1956) in a subject political culture individuals are mostly aware of the output structures of government through which policies are applied or enforced, for example the courts. These individuals will be aware of elections and the activities of parties and interest groups to the extent that these things exert an influence on their life. Subjects could even have some knowledge of the Constitution and of electoral procedure.

Affective Component

This component relates to how the individual feels toward the political process, and other political groups. In the subject political culture, citizens do not see themselves as participants in the political process but rather as subjects of the government Hague and Harrop (2001: 79). This means that individuals with this orientation dominant will not feel like their participation in the political process can make a difference. Almond and Powell (1978: 35) found that "their view of their own

role in politics remains that of subjects, affected by governmental action, but not active in shaping it". These individuals will be aware of events such as elections and the impact that these will have on them, but will not participate in the process, not because they are indifferent to it as a parochial would be; but because in their minds it will not make a difference. And the same would apply to events such as rallies or marches organised by interest groups or parties. The subject would be aware of them, but have no inclination to join in.

Evaluative Component

This component relates to what the individual thinks about the political process. And in this case, what an individual would think about the political process closely mirrors his feelings toward it.

Participant Process Culture

In a participant political culture citizens believe that they can contribute to the system, and play an activist role Hague and Harrop (2001: 79).

Cognitive Component

This component will relate to how much people know about matters relating to the political process, and other political groups. The individual in whom the participant orientation is dominant is well informed about matters relating to politics and the political process. Such individuals will have no trouble identifying the leaders of the principal parties and are more likely than the parochial or the subject to be familiar with the Constitution. This is because participants "develop an awareness of the input processes of the society, those which facilitate their own involvement in politics" Almond and Powell (1978: 35). These individuals have an abiding interest in how the system operates and the ways in which they can contribute and participate. Participants will be aware of the existence and activities of interest groups.

Affective Component

This component relates to how the individual feels toward the political process, and other political groups. According to Almond and Powell (1978: 36) "The participant citizen...is an individual who knows something about politics and feels he or she can be active in it". Even if the participant does not approve of the political authorities, his feelings toward the political process will remain positive in the sense that he will perceive his (potential) participation in the process as a way in which to bring about change. For example, members of anti-apartheid resistance groups. This is due in part to their "sense of confidence that they can affect national political events if they try to do so" Almond and Powell (1978: 35).

Evaluative Component

This relates to what the individual thinks about the political process. The participant will perceive the political process and his participation in it as the logical way in which to improve things both for himself and society in general. These individuals are aware of the potential of their actions to transform material reality.

Civic Culture

While the participant political culture is the one associated with a democratic political structure, Almond and Verba (1956) argued that it is a combination of the three types of political culture that is most supportive of a stable democracy. This ideal combination is called a civic culture. An individual will display traits of each of the political culture- types to varying degrees and it is possible for one trait to dominate over the others. In the same way, it is possible for a society in general to display traits associated with each of the types and for one or more to dominate at different times. A civic culture is a balanced political culture. It is one in which the character traits associated with each of the types of political culture exist side by side in a dynamic relationship,

each modifying the influence of the other. The individual who votes and follows politics but has a passive relationship with government can find the participant aspect begin to dominate when an issue arises that affects him personally. The subject and parochial orientations which previously acted to rein in unbridled activism will not disappear, but rather still influence the ways in which he chooses to organize and lobby. And then, after the threat has been dealt with and passes, there will be a return to the relative dominance of the parochial-subject orientation, but still, modified by the participant urge to vote and maybe blog to express satisfaction with, or disapproval of, the system.

It was observed by Almond and Verba (1956: 22) that each political culture type corresponds with a particular type of political system. A parochial, subject, and participant culture would correspond with, respectively, a traditional or tribal political structure, a centralized authoritarian political structure like a dictatorship, and a democratic political structure Almond and Verba (1956: 20). However, the political culture of a society may or may not correspond with its political system. When this happens there is a strain between culture and system and a tendency toward instability Almond and Verba (1956: 22). My task was to determine if the political culture of students at Howard College corresponds with the type of political system that South Africa is.

But the problem with this is that a political system like South Africa is a mix of each of these types. Since 1994 the party in charge of government is elected by popular vote through regular elections in which every citizen has the right to participate. And the structures and powers of government are codified in a Constitution. In this respect, South Africa ticks some of the boxes for a democratic state. But there are areas of the country where people still respect and defer to the authority of tribal chiefs. The authority of traditional leaders is itself recognised by the Constitution of the country. Because the ruling party in charge of government consistently enjoys such a large majority in parliament, it can be argued that the country is in the grip of a legislative dictatorship. The

opposition parties in parliament have had little real success in checking the ruling party. This means that despite being a parliamentary democracy, the real power to govern the country is in fact consolidated in the hands of a ruling elite. The ruling elite of the party in charge of government. And all indications point to a growing subordination of the interests of the state to those of the ruling party.

This means that it will be difficult to define the type of political system that South Africa is, in practice. Since the type of political system is a mix of different types, it can be expected that the type of political culture which corresponds with this system, will itself be a mix of political culture types.

Civic Engagement

According to McFarland and Thomas (2006: 402) youth who engage in extra-curricular activities are predisposed to civic participation and acquire a greater dimension of civic competence. This participation develops "capacities, motives and relationships necessary for adult political involvement". Almond and Verba (1956) lay no less an emphasis on the importance of voluntary associations to develop an individual's spirit of civic co-operation and engage with government. It is a given that the individual who tries to influence the government with the help of others – neighbours, family, friends, ratepayers association – will at least be more successful than the individual who decides to go it alone. Therefore, it is important to inculcate this sense of co-operation; and youth involvement in voluntary organisations is one way in which this can be fostered. By the time they reach adulthood, youth who have been members of voluntary organisations will have grown accustomed to working together for a common goal. They will have the skills necessary to initiate and lead collective efforts to bring about an outcome, be it opposing the construction of a toll road or fund raising for a prayer hall. Voluntary associations are the prime

means by which the function of mediating between the individual and the state is performed Almond and Verba (1956: 245). They are the means through which individuals are able to pool their influence and acumen to better represent their needs and demands to the government.

Individuals who are members of voluntary organisations gain an advantage in the acquisition of skills and competencies which will allow them to participate in civic society, and better represent their grievances to government when the need arises. Therefore it is important to test the disposition of youth toward membership of voluntary organisations. Numerous clubs and societies exist at tertiary institutions around the country. Some of these clubs and societies are the youth chapters of adult civic organisations, such as the non-governmental organisation Habitat for Humanity. At the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College, extra-curricular activities abound for those who are interested. Being part of an organisation such as Remember and Give (RAG) or working on the campus newspaper provides students with the "capacities, motives and relationships necessary for adult political involvement" that McFarland and Thomas (2006: 402) spoke of. In addition, students are permitted to start their own organisations. For the individual with a participant- oriented personality, this could be the beginning of an education in how to organize people for collective action.

The value of this investigation is that it can help to establish if there is a link between participation in these kinds of activity and an individual's attitudes toward, and knowledge of, politics. It is also possible to determine if there is a link between the type of organisation people are members of, the type of political culture which they seem to most embody.

Policy Culture

This aspect of political culture focuses on "the patterns of orientations toward public policies"

Almond and Powell (1978: 39). The policy culture is described in terms of what ordinary individuals know, think, and feel about the internal and external policies of the system Almond (1990: 17). According to Almond and Powell (1978: 39) "To understand the politics of a system, one must understand the issues and preference distributions salient to those involved".

Cognitive Component

An individual's knowledge of "the working of the political system, its leading figures, and the current policy problems" Almond and Powell (1978: 26) would be the cognitive component of their orientation toward the system as a whole. At the policy level, we are concerned solely with how much the individual knows and understands about domestic and foreign policy. Are individuals aware of the different policies being implemented by the government? To determine these answers, I posed questions relating to domestic and foreign policy to students in a self-administered questionnaire. There were an equal number of questions on domestic and foreign policy.

Affective Component

The affective component of an individual's orientation toward public policy will refer to their feelings toward it, for example approval or dissatisfaction. To determine this, I posed questions to students relating to the impact of government activity on their lives and the quality of government performance. Their answers to these questions were indicative of their sentiments, of approval or dissatisfaction, with the outputs of government.

Evaluative Component

The evaluative component of an individual's orientation toward public policy will relate to their moral evaluation of the policies. On what grounds does s/he approve or disapprove of particular policies? And what are the issues s/he believes should be on the agenda? To determine this, I asked

students to list what they thought were the biggest challenges facing the country today, and then to explain whether or not they thought the government was doing enough to address these challenges. Finally, I asked them to explain what they thought would be the best policies to deal with that they perceived to be the challenges facing the country.

Chapter 4: Research Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods employed to design and execute the research project. The twin goals of this research were to measure how much South African youth at Howard College know about politics in their country, and to understand their attitudes and feelings toward politics. The theoretical framework I built guided my hand at every step in the design process, from selecting items for the questionnaire to formulating questions for interviews. In the sections that follow I will describe how my research objectives and theoretical framework influenced the design and execution of this research.

Step One: Selecting the Instrument

The first stage in the design process was selecting the instrument I would use to gather the data I needed. There were two options available to me: a questionnaire or interviews. I decided to use a combination of both. This was motivated by my reading of Nesbitt-Larking (1992) who claimed that a limitation of past studies on political culture was methodological. The "problem" as he put it, was that the methodologies used failed to "convey the practices of real men and women as they make sense together of their power-related[3] experiences" Nesbitt-Larking (1992: 79) which could only have been achieved through the stimulation of dialogue between the researcher and the subjects. The solution to this is to combine "the styles of in-depth and mass research" Nesbitt-Larking (1992: 86). This means that in order to avoid the limitations of the past, future research on political culture must utilise both questionnaires (a style of mass research) and interviews (which allow the researcher to go in-depth).

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[3]   It would be useful to note here that Nesbitt-Larking (1992) defines political culture in terms of the practices of power.

Step Two: Designing the Instrument

A) The Questionnaire

I designed a self-administered questionnaire that consisted of two sections. Section A of the questionnaire consisted of a battery of twelve items testing knowledge of politics. Section B investigated students' attitudes and feelings toward the political authorities, political process and public policy. This division by section reflected the definition of political culture as a concept with two components: knowledge of politics and attitudes and feelings toward politics Almond and Verba (1956: 12). The design of each section was influenced by the functionalist approach to the study of political culture adopted by Almond and Powell (1978). I divided the political system into three distinct yet interrelated levels (system, process and policy) and posed a set of questions relating to each.

In the first section I posed a set of four questions about each level of the political system. The discussion that follows will show how the selection of items for the first section of the questionnaire was influenced by the theoretical framework. (Please see Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire.)

The objects that represent the system level are the political authorities, the regime and the nation. To test students' knowledge of the political authorities I began by asking them to identify the ministers of three national government departments. For a test of the authorities in charge of local government, the next question asked students if they knew who their ward councillor was. In an open ended question I asked students the question, "What does the state President do?" The purpose of this question was to determine whether they understand the role and duties of the President of the Republic. The final question dealt with the regime. Almond and Powell (1973: 34) consider it

important to distinguish between the institutional structure of the state, and the authorities or people in charge of it. I wanted to find out if students were able to differentiate between the state and government and devised a question to do this. I employed a set of three true or false type questions to determine if students could tell the difference between the roles of state and government.

The process level is concerned with the self as an actor in the political process, and other political groups such as parties and interest groups Almond (1990: 17). To test students' knowledge of political groups I began by asking them to name the leaders of the principal national parties. The next question related to the rules governing the electoral process. In South Africa members of parliament are chosen from a list. I asked students who decides which candidates will get on the list. Next, the Constitution of South Africa can only be amended by a vote that carries a two-thirds majority in parliament. I wanted to find out if students were aware of this fact. It is of relevance because the Constitution governs the political process, it comprises the set of rules by which all other rules are made. The final question asked students if they could name the ANC's alliance partners. I decided to include this question because the tripartite alliance is an association of organisations that together wield a considerable political clout. And I wanted to find out if South African youth were aware of the organisations that comprise it.

The third and final level of the political system is the policy level. The objects of interest at this level are domestic and foreign policy. To test students' knowledge about domestic policy I asked them to name from a list of alternatives the body responsible for the design and implementation of public policy in South Africa. In a democratic political system, public policy can be affected by interest groups. I wanted to find out if students were aware of a particularly famous case of an interest group influencing health policy in South Africa. In 2001 the TAC took the government to court over the provision of free ARVs to patients with HIV and won. I asked students to pick the

name of the interest group that did this from a list of alternatives. I allocated four questions in my test to each level of the political system. For this level I divided the total allocation to set half the questions on domestic or public policy and half on foreign policy. To test students' knowledge of foreign policy I began by asking them which southern African country South Africa provided a R2.4 Billion bailout to 2011. The next question asked students what the acronym SADC stood for. The membership of South Africa in the Southern African Development Community is akin to the membership of the United States in NATO or NAFTA. The objectives of SADC and the agreements struck by its members have important implications for the lives of South Africans.

B) Group Interviews

I decided to address the point made by Nesbitt-Larking (1992: 79) about stimulating dialogue between researcher and subject by conducting interviews with small groups of students. I decided to run four such interviews.

I planned to ask general questions relating to each level of political culture in the first group interview. For discussion about system culture I chose questions relating to national identity and the job of the state President. I also added a question about following politics and public affairs in the media to find out what students think about being informed. I decided to ask questions relating to political participation for the process level. These questions related to students' attitudes toward voting, and political consumerism, and Facebook as alternative avenues of participation. I selected the (then) recent changes in street names in Durban to honour struggle heroes as a topic to facilitate discussion about government policies and students' attitudes toward them.

In the second interview I planned to explore an element of system culture that related to students' attitudes toward rules and laws. One of the concerns of the system level is the way that individuals

evaluate the activities and performance of government. An important example is whether or not people perceive the system as being legitimate or not, and their attitudes toward following the rules that the authorities make. Almond and Powell (1978: 30) claimed that when we evaluate the legitimacy of a system we have to consider whether "the citizens in the society are willing to obey the rules that the authorities make and implement, not merely because the citizens will be punished if they disobey, but because the citizens believe that they ought to obey". I based my determination of how students evaluate the legitimacy of the system on their attitudes toward rules and laws. The questions I selected sought to determine whether they follow the rules because they fear the penalties for not doing so, or if they do so because they believe it is the right thing to do and the authorities have the right to make these rules.

In the third interview I planned to ask questions relating to different theories of citizenship in order to understand how the youth conceive of the rights and obligations associated with being a citizen. This is because their beliefs will influence their behaviour and participation in society and the political system. The concept of citizenship is related to the process level since it has to do with how students' perceive themselves as political actors. This interview would have allowed me to go more in-depth about the topic of citizenship than would have been possible in a questionnaire. There were several questions that I wanted to address. For example, how do young people learn what is expected of themselves as citizens and political actors, in a country like South Africa where children are not provided with civic education in high school? How do young people acquire the knowledge of how to be good citizens, or do they not? Is this facet of their lives, as citizens of a state, left to peer groups and the family? Is it a taken for granted feature of their political socialization? Even if people do not evaluate certain forms of knowledge, activities or processes in terms of citizenship they still have a way of dealing with them that is relevant to a discussion of political culture. These questions were to be the basis of the first part of the interview, to find out

how people learn about the things that fall under the umbrella of "citizenship" in the first place, and then how they continue to learn and make sense of it. The second part of the interview would have focused on describing what young people think about citizenship and the rights and obligations of citizens and how this fits into their lives.

In the fourth interview I planned to explore the question of national identity. The nation is one of the objects of the system level and when we consider an individual's feelings toward the nation, we consider the issue of national identity. According to Almond and Powell (1978: 33) "The political community is the whole group of individuals who are bound together into a common political process...the problem of support for the political community is often called the problem of national identity". To investigate individuals' feelings toward the nation and the question of national identity, I created a set of questions meant to explore how young South Africans negotiate what it means to be South African. The value of focusing on questions related to national identity was that it would have helped indicate how people felt toward the system as a whole.

Step Three: The Process of Data Collection

The next step after designing the questionnaire and the questions for the interviews was to recruit respondents and interviewees. I decided that the study would be based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College. This decision was for two reasons. The first reason was based on the set of theories that underpin the research. McFarland and Thomas (2006: 401) claimed that:

> For most citizens, the process of becoming politically active (or inactive) begins in early adulthood when people initially become eligible to vote, join political parties, and engage in adult civic organisations.

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In South Africa, the period in which people gain the ability to vote and engage in adult political activity is in their late teens, at age eighteen. This is also the age at which most people finish high school and some begin to enrol at institutions of higher learning such as universities and colleges. Therefore the period spent in pursuit of a higher education coincides with the time that young people begin to develop their attitudes and feelings toward politics. This provided a compelling reason to choose a tertiary institution as the study area. In addition, I needed to recruit respondents between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four, and places like universities and colleges provide a concentration of people in this age group. The second reason for choosing an institution of higher learning, and Howard College in particular was based on convenience. This is the institution I was enrolled at and I decided it would be easier to conduct the study on a campus that I was familiar with.

Sampling

Since it is not possible to test the knowledge and poll the opinions of every student at Howard College, I had to draw a sample of respondents that was representative of the population I was interested in. The population of interest consisted of male and female students aged between eighteen and twenty-one who were South African citizens. The sampling procedure I employed was a form of non-probability sampling called quota sampling. I selected quota sampling because I wanted my sample to mirror the demographic composition of the general student population at Howard College. The mechanics of quota sampling make this procedure well suited to the task. This is accomplished by using information such as a census about the general population to reproduce it using a smaller group of people.

I used a headcount of students at Howard College conducted in 2010 to decide the proportions of different groups in relation to each other. The results of this headcount are shown in Table 1. The

percentages included reflect the representation of each group in the headcount.

Group	2010 Head Count	
Black Females	4390	38.90%
Black Males	2152	19.00%
Coloured Females	225	1.90%
Coloured Males	90	1.20%
Indian Females	1924	17.00%
Indian Males	1288	11.40%
White Females	534	4.70%
White Males	668	5.90%

Table 1: Student headcount at Howard College 2010

My intended sample size was one hundred students. However, I fell short of this target for reasons that I will discuss later in the chapter. In the end I obtained a sample of fifty-one students. Table 2 reflects the real composition of the sample alongside the ideal representation if the quotas had been calculated based on a sample size of fifty-one students.

Group	Ideal Representation		Real Representation	
Black Females	19	37.20%	12	23.5%
Black Males	10	19.60%	3	5.8%
Coloured Females	1	1.90%	0	0%
Coloured Males	1	1.90%	0	0%
Indian Females	9	17.60%	21	41%
Indian Males	6	11.70%	11	21.5%
White Females	2	3.90%	3	5.8%
White Males	3	5.80%	1	1.9%

Table 2: Real vs. Ideal composition of sample

Recruiting Respondents

I sought respondents in the Dennis Shepstone building which is a thoroughfare with high foot

traffic. Table 3 shows the ideal representation of each group in the sample if it contained one hundred students and reflects the quotas I set out to fill. The procedure I followed was to approach every ninth person I encountered to participate. The purpose of this was to attempt make the selection of participants random, and to eliminate possible bias on my part. When I approached potential respondents I introduced myself and my purpose with the following line: "Hi. I'm Jiovaan. I'm conducting research for my masters in political science. Do you have a few minutes to complete a brief survey?" When I received a response in the affirmative I would obtain informed consent by asking them to read the informed consent form I handed to them. The form contained a brief description of the research and their rights as participants. (Please see Appendix A for a copy of the form.) After consenting, I would hand the student a copy of the questionnaire and give them time on their own to fill it in. When the student completed the questionnaire and after I thanked them for their participation, I would explain that I was conducting interviews with questions similar to the kind in the questionnaire and I would invite them to participate by adding their contact details to a list. In the end, no one expressed the desire to participate in the group interviews. And for this reason I was un-able to conduct them. However this did not impair the quality of the findings since the responses obtained in the questionnaire proved sufficient to answer the research questions I set to investigate.

Group	Sample
Black Females	39
Black Males	19
Coloured Females	2
Coloured Males	1
Indian Females	17
Indian Males	11
White Females	5
White Males	6

Table 3: Ideal representation of race groups in the sample

Ultimately, I was only able to fill the quotas for three groups: Indian males, Indian females and White females. I believe that part of the reason I did not succeed in meeting the quotas I set had to do with the length of the questionnaire. After I would ask a potential respondent if they were willing to participate, a question I often encountered was how long it would take to complete. In the pilot phase, when I asked several friends to complete the questionnaire I found that it took on average ten to fifteen minutes to complete. This was too long for some students and when advised of the length of time the questionnaire would take to complete, they declined to participate. Other students consented, but ran out of time before they had to move on for their next class or meeting. I considered the questionnaires these students had begun but could not complete "spoiled" and discarded them.

Chapter 5: Knowledge of Politics

Introduction

In this chapter I will present and discuss the results of the test I administered to a sample of students at Howard College to measure their knowledge of politics in South Africa. This discussion will be divided into three sections that will each deal with a different level of the political system.

Almond and Verba (1956: 57) defined a knowledge of politics as one of the two components of a political culture. This is because if people expect to influence politics then accurate information about political issues and processes is a logical prerequisite Almond and Verba (1956: 57). It all comes down to being able to make an informed decision. A good decision is an informed decision because it is made using reliable and accurate information. In the context of politics, citizens in their role as voters need to learn about how the political and electoral system functions to understand the significance of their vote. It is crucial that citizens be able to name the people in charge of government because this will let them track and evaluate their performance, which will impact on the decision to vote these people back into power at the next election.

The System Level

The objects that represent the system level are the political authorities, the regime and the nation Almond and Powell (1978: 34). In this section I asked questions that related to two of these objects, political authorities and the regime. The reason for this was because questions relating to the nation explore whether or not people feel a sense of loyalty to the state and this is better dealt with in Section B of the questionnaire which focuses on attitudes and feelings, and not objective knowledge.

By political authorities Almond and Powell (1978: 34) meant the people who work in government,

and this can include both political appointees and civil servants. The regime refers to the state apparatus which consists of government departments and agencies. The questions in this section therefore relate to knowledge about the state, its structures and the individuals who occupy positions within it.

I tested students' knowledge of the authorities in charge of national government by asking them to pick the correct minister in charge of a particular department from a list of three alternatives. I chose the departments of Basic Education, Health and Finance for the reason that these are key portfolios which make headline news on a regular basis. For example, in 2011 (the year in which fieldwork began) the department of Health and the minister in charge often appeared in the news in connection with the on-going debate over the proposed National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme. The department of Finance and the minister in charge are guaranteed to receive widespread press coverage on the occasion of the minister's presentation of the annual budget to parliament. The event is broadcast live to the nation on both television and radio and it is difficult (if not impossible) to escape hearing about it. In a similar manner the department of Basic Education and the minister in charge are guaranteed national attention when the country's matric results are released each year.

Question 1a of Section A asked students to name the Minister for Basic Education. Only thirty-three percent of students could name Angie Motshekga as the then current minister for Basic Education. Close to half (47%) believed it was the previous incumbent, Naledi Pandor. And eighteen percent believed it was Blade Nzimande, the minister for Higher Education. For ease of comparison Figure 1 shows the results for questions 1a to 1c side by side.

Question 1b of Section A asked students to name the Minister for Health. Forty-nine percent of students could correctly name Aaron Motsoaledi as the minister for Health. Sixteen percent believed

it was the previous incumbent, Barbara Hogan. And twenty-five percent believed it was Baleka Mbete, former speaker of the house and one time deputy president of the republic.

Question 1c of Section A asked students to name the Minister for Finance. Eighty percent of the sample could name Pravin Gordhan as the then current minister for Finance. Sixteen percent believed it was the previous incumbent, Trevor Manuel. And two percent believed it was the ANC Secretary General, Gwede Mantashe.

Can you name the following Ministers?

0	Minister for Basic Education
Naledi Pandor	47%
Blade Nzimande	18%
Angie Motshekga*	33%
0	Minister for Health
Barbara Hogan	16%
Aaron Motsoaledi*	49%
Baleka Mbete	25%
0	Minister for Finance
Trevor Manuel	16%
Pravin Gordhan*	80%
Gwede Mantashe	2%
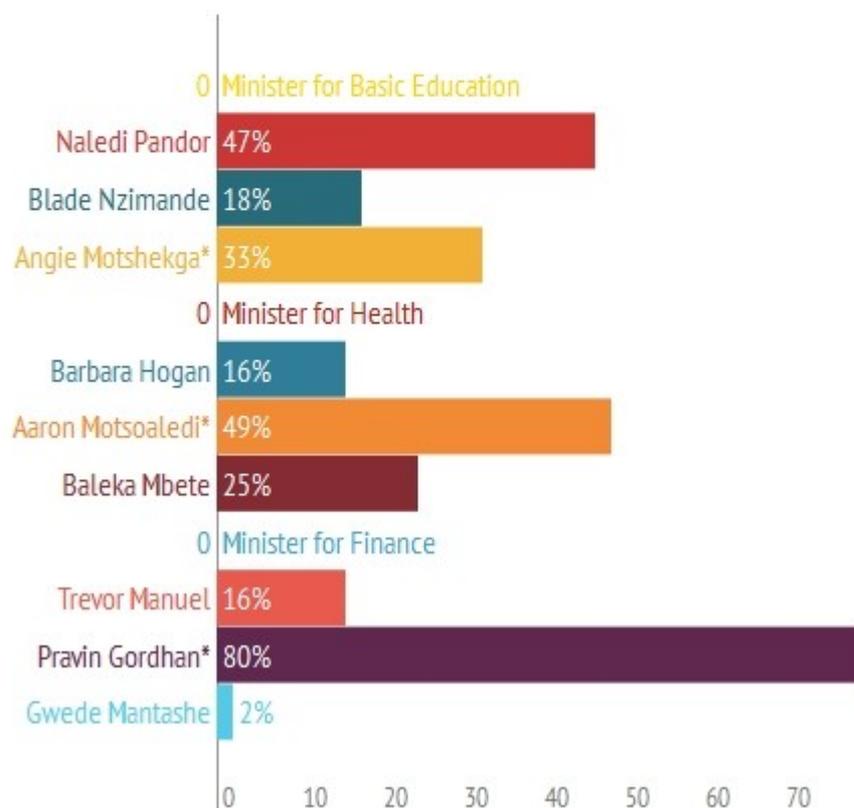
Figure 1: A breakdown of responses

In summary, the minister for Finance was the only minister that more than half of the sample was

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able to correctly identify. Almost half of all students (49%) were able to name Aaron Motsoaledi as the current minister for Health, but the majority (51%) could not. The minister for Basic Education was the least well known of the three. These results show that the majority of students (47%) thought that Naledi Pandor was still in charge of the department. Naledi Pandor was the Minister for Education during the Mbeki and Motlanthe administrations before the election of President Zuma. This is significant as the only instance in which the majority of the students have identified the previous incumbent as the one still in charge.

My conclusion based on these findings was that students at Howard College are under- informed but not *un*-informed about the political authorities in charge of national government. However, it is important to note that due to the size of the sample (51 students) and because five respondents did not answer this question, just one more correct response in the question about the minister for Health would have altered the portrait of awareness presented here. The findings for this set of questions hang on a single response because if just one more student had identified Minister Motsoaledi, then the percentage of responses in his favour would have risen to fifty-one percent. This would have brought the number of ministers that students were able to identify to two out of three. And I would have then concluded that students at Howard College are informed, but not *well* informed about the political authorities in charge of national government.

The results for this set of questions are supported by those obtained in a similar study on the political culture of students at Howard College that I conducted in 2010 which also investigated knowledge of politics. I used the same set of questions to assess students' knowledge of the authorities in charge of national government. Table 4 compares the results from 2010 to those obtained in 2012. The comparison shows that the results obtained in each study were the same. The minister for Finance was the only minister that more than half of the students in each study were

able to name. The minister for Education was the least well known of the three ministers in both studies and a significant number of respondents in each study still thought that Naledi Pandor was in charge of the department. The same results have been obtained with a different sample at different points in time. This means that the results for this set of questions are replicable and therefore reliable.

In chapter four I explained how I was unable to meet the quotas I had set for the sample. This means that the sample for this study is not as representative of the population of interest as I anticipated it would be. However, this does not mean that the results obtained using this sample are therefore unreliable. This is because the results obtained for this set of questions correspond with those obtained using a sample that was representative. In 2010 I employed the same sampling procedure but managed to meet the designated quotas for a sample of fifty-one students. The composition of the sample in 2010 reflects the ideal composition for a sample of its size illustrated in Table 2 of chapter four.

While the essential findings remain the same, the comparison reflected in Table 4 reveals an interesting point. There is a slight fluctuation of two percent when you compare the number of correct responses for the questions about the minsters of Health and Finance. Forty-nine percent of students were able to name the minister for Health in 2012 compared to forty-seven percent in 2010. And eighty-two percent of students were able to identify the minister for Finance in 2010 compared to eighty percent in 2012. But there has been an eleven percent decline in the percentage of students able to name the minister for Basic Education. In 2010 forty-four percent of students correctly identified Angie Motshekga as the minister. In 2012 this number had declined to thirty-three percent of students. The decrease in the percentage of students who named Angie Motshekga as minister was accompanied by an increase in the number of students who incorrectly named the

previous incumbent, Naledi Pandor.

Minister Pandor was in charge of the department of Education from 2004 to 2009, for a period of five years. This means that when I asked students to name the minister for Basic Education in 2010, the name of Naledi Pandor would have held the greatest association with this position when compared to the incumbent who would have been in office for just over a year at the time of the questionnaire being administered. This can account for the greater number of students who (incorrectly) named Naledi Pandor as the incumbent. But by the time I asked students to name the minister for Basic Education again in late 2011, Minister Motshekga would have been in office for over two years. It is reasonable to expect that by then more people would be better informed about who was in charge of the department, given the great deal of attention that this minister in particular receives each year when the national matric results are released. However this was not the case.

Who is the Minister for Health? (*correct)			
2010		2012	
Answer	Response	Answer	Response
Aaron Motsoaledi*	47%	Aaron Motsoaledi*	49%
Barbara Hogan	37%	Barbara Hogan	16%
Dr. Manto Tshabalala-Msimang	16%	Baleka Mbete	25%
Who is the Minister for Finance? (*correct)			
2010		2012	
Answer	Response	Answer	Response
Pravin Gordhan*	82%	Pravin Gordhan*	80%
Trevor Manuel	14%	Trevor Manuel	16%
Gwede Mantashe	4%	Gwede Mantashe	2%
Who is the Minister for Basic Education? (*correct)			
2010		2012	
Answer	Response	Answer	Response
Angie Motshekga*	44%	Angie Motshekga*	33%

| Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma | 14% | Blade Nzimande | 18% |
| Naledi Pandor | 42% | Naledi Pandor | 47% |

Table 4: A Comparison of Responses between 2010 and 2012

I divided the sample into four different sub-groups based on how many ministers each student was able to name right. Table 5 explains the composition of each group and Figure 2 shows the relative size of each sub-group in the sample.

Uninformed	More Informed	Better Informed	Best Informed
Named 0 out of 3	Named 1 out of 3	Named 2 out of 3	Named 3 out of 3

Table 5: From the Uninformed to the Best informed

In the discussion that follows I will focus on the sub-group called the Best Informed because I was interested in the shared characteristics of the minority in the sample that could match the ministries in question with the correct people in charge.
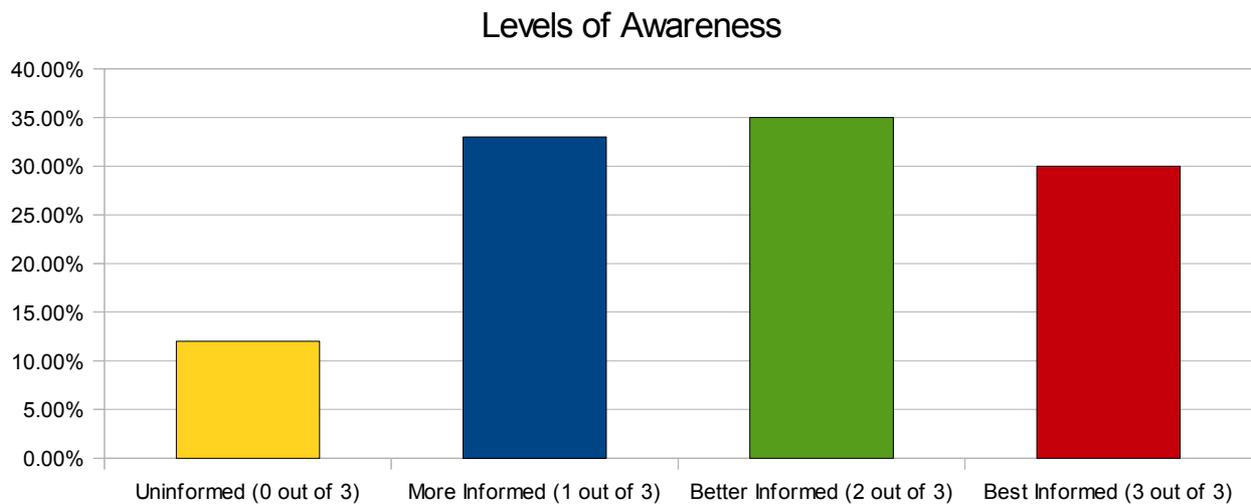
Figure 2: Levels of Awareness by relative percentage

I decided to filter the results for this sub-group by age, gender and race. The purpose of this was to understand whether these variables can affect citizens' knowledge of politics. In addition I compared the results from this study with those obtained in 2010 to see if the results still held true.

In the discussion that follows I will use what I call a True Ranking to analyse the results obtained. This was an idea I came up with to solve the problem of one demographic sub-group dominating over others in the sample. The effect of this is to stack the deck in favour of a particular group (males over females for instance) which will lead to findings that cannot be relied upon. The way in which the idea of a True Ranking solves this problem is best explained using a simple example. If I wanted to calculate whether male or female students scored better on a question, the most obvious measure would be to add up which group had the most correct answers. But what if the sample contained a disproportionately high number of female students? The answer is that then female students would dominate the results and appear to be better (or worse) informed than they in fact were. One solution to this is not to consider how many female students got the answer right, but what *percentage* of female students (out of all females present in the sample) compared to their male counterparts answered correctly. This will provide a clearer picture of the performance of each demographic sub-group and this is how I chose to filter the results I obtained.

Understanding the Best Informed

Figure 2 shows that thirty percent of students could name only one minister out of the three they were questioned about. This was the third largest sub-group of the four (it contained 10 students).

Age

Figure 3 shows that in 2010 students aged eighteen dominated this sub-group, but that in 2012 twenty-four-year-olds claimed the top spot.

In 2010 a significant minority of eighteen-year-olds (43%) were more likely than any other age group to be able to name all three ministers questioned about. However In 2012 not one eighteen-year-old could do so, and one hundred percent of twenty-four-year-olds could. This makes the latter

the most knowledgeable about the political authorities in charge of national government in the latest study.

In 2010 close to half of all eighteen-year-olds (43%) could name all three national ministers, but In 2012 not one eighteen-year-old could. This decline from forty-three percent to nothing is interesting because one would not expect eighteen-year-olds to be as knowledgeable about politics as their older peers for the reason that they have not had the same length of exposure to it. But in 2010 eighteen-year-olds exceeded expectation. In the time between the two studies students from this age group must have grown less informed about, or interested in, national government, because none of them were be able to name three ministers in charge when in the past a significant percentage of them could.

In 2012 one hundred percent of twenty-four-year old students in the sample could name all three national ministers they were questioned about. This confirmed the hypothesis that older students are in fact better informed about politics, perhaps due to their longer term exposure to it.

Can you name the following Ministers?
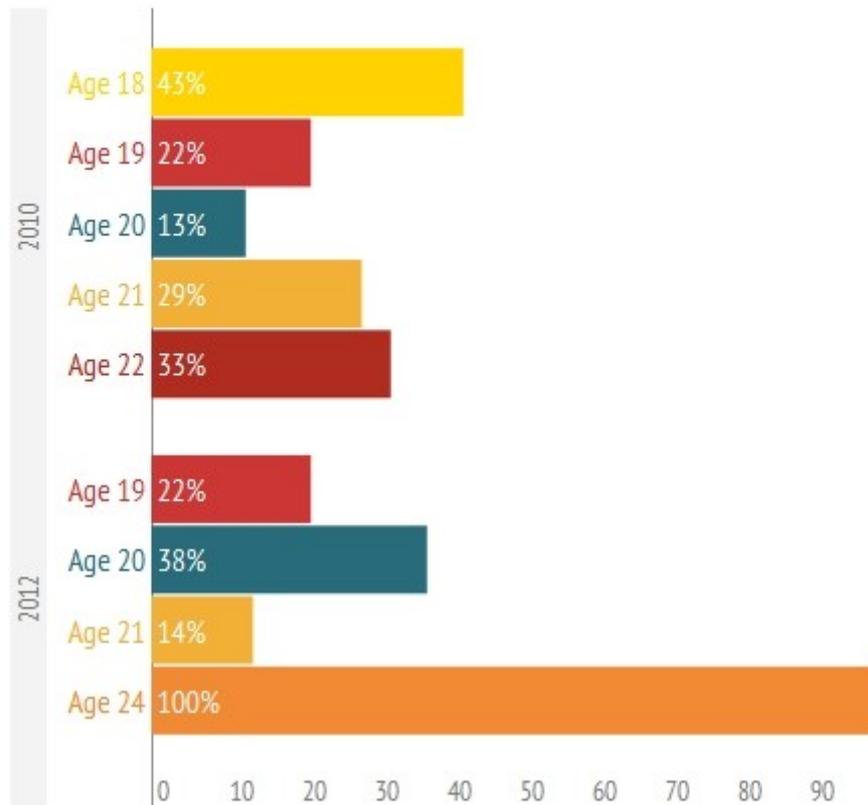
Figure 3: Can you name the following Ministers? 2010 vs. 2012 by Age

Gender

Figure 4 shows that in 2010 females dominated this sub-group, but that in 2012 this dominance declined because a greater percentage of male students than females could name all three ministers they were questioned about.

In 2010 a greater percentage of female students (29%) compared to male students (20%) could name all three national ministers they were questioned about. This is significant because the general trend in the literature indicates that males are better informed than females regarding politics. In

2012 there was a decline of twelve percent in the number of female students overall who could name all three ministers. This means that in the intervening time some female students became less interested or well informed about national government.

In 2012 female dominance in this sub-group was reversed, because there was a seven percent increase in the number of male students overall who were able to name all three ministers. This increase coupled with the decrease in the number of female students who could do the same meant that male students became the best informed of the two.

Race

In 2010 Black students dominated this sub-group. There were no White students present and a small number of Indians. In 2012 Black students continued to dominate, but by a smaller margin.

2010			2012		
Black	Indian	White	Black	Indian	White
41.00%	0.00%	7.00%	27.00%	16.00%	25.00%

Table 5: Can you name the following Ministers? 2010 vs. 2012 by Age

In 2010 forty-one percent of Black students were able to name all three national ministers they were questioned about. But in 2012 only twenty-seven percent were able to do so. This is a decline of fourteen percent. In both studies Black students were more likely to be able to name all three ministers than students from any other race group, but this position has been eroded to an enormous degree.

In 2010 not one White student could name all three ministers but in 2012, twenty-five percent of them could. This represents a (slight) gain in awareness for White students. In 2010 only seven percent of Indian students could name all three ministers, but in 2012 this has grown to sixteen

percent. This means that while other race groups had seen some small gains in their ability to name all three ministers, Blacks have seen their ability to do so decrease.

Can you name the following Ministers?
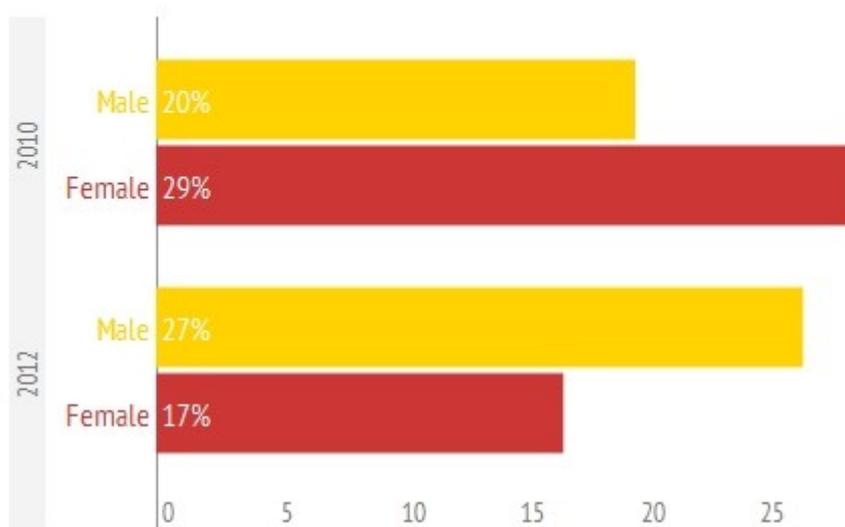
Figure 4: Can you name the following Ministers? 2010 vs. 2012 by Gender

Interest in Public Affairs

Eight out of the ten students in this sub-group reported following public affairs in the media. And nine out of ten indicated that they discussed public affairs and political scandals with other people. This proves that the best informed were those who kept up with events in the media and talked about it with others.

Follow Public Affairs in the Media	Discuss Public Affairs and Political Scandals
80.00%	90.00%

Table 6: Can you name the following ministers? A comparison of responses based on interest in public affairs

Local Government

In the second of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the people in charge of government I chose to focus on governance at the local level. In Question 3 students were asked, "Do you know who your ward councillor is?" and could answer either yes or no in response. If students responded in the affirmative, the next question invited them to provide the name and party affiliation of their ward councillor.
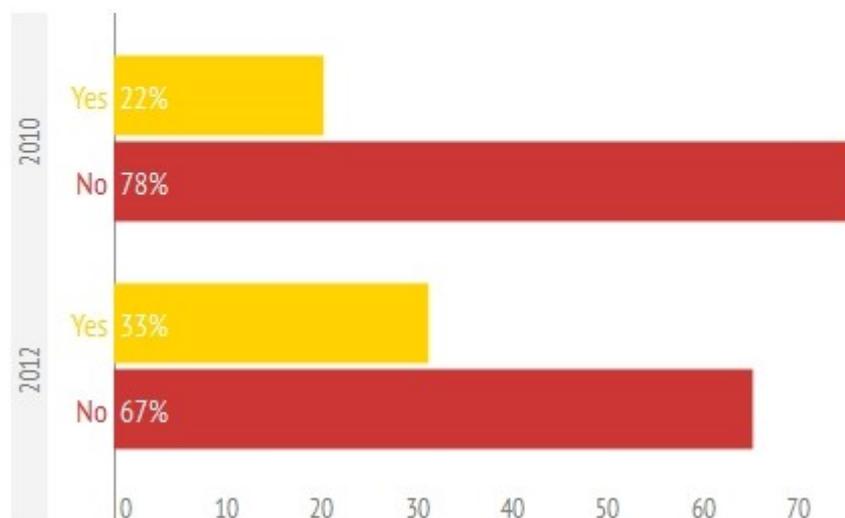
Figure 5: Do you know who your ward councillor is?

I chose to focus on local government for two reasons. The first reason was that when Almond and Verba (1956) tested citizens on their knowledge of politics in *The Civic Culture* the set of questions they used focused on national politics alone. It did not ask them about local government. This highlighted for me an area which had not been covered and one that I could investigate. The second reason I decided to focus on local government was because municipalities (the units of local

government) and councillors (the representatives of local government) tend to make the news often in South Africa with regard to issues such as corruption and the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation. It is important that people are aware of how local government operates and who is in charge of it because "local government services directly shape families and communities in the areas such as health care, education, electricity and sanitation" SALGA (1998) cited in Maharaj and Maharaj (2004: 263).

There are two types of councillors in local government. The first type is a proportional representation (PR) councillor and the second kind is a ward councillor. I chose to focus on ward councillors in particular because these individuals are elected directly by the people from the area (ward) that they are meant to represent. At the outset I expected that even if the youth were not well versed in their knowledge of national politics and government that they would be better informed about issues closer to home such as who their local representative was. But upon examination of the results I found that this was not the case. Figure 5 shows that just 33% of students at Howard College (or 17 out of 51) could name their ward councillor and the party they represented. In order to understand the significance of this finding I need to first explain local government in South Africa and the role of a ward councillor in it.

There are three levels of governance in South Africa and local government is one of them, the other two being national and provincial. At the end of Apartheid local government was re-organised, and a country that had been previously divided geographically by race was united. Nine new provinces were created and these were further sub-divided into units called municipalities. There are 238 municipalities in South Africa. This means that every town, village, city and suburb in the country is part of a municipality. As a point of interest, Howard College (the site of research for this study) is located in the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. There are different types of municipalities

but in general these can all be considered as the basic units of local government. Each municipality is run by a municipal council. This council has legislative and executive powers over the area the municipality comprises SALGA (2011: 29) and this council is made up of elected councillors who make "decisions about how the council is run, what services the council should provide, and how the council should spend its money" SALGA (2011: 29).

The individuals elected to become councillors are important because these people will comprise the pool of potential candidates for the executive, which includes the offices of the mayor and the speaker. As I mentioned before, there are two types of councillor. A PR councillor is elected through a system of proportional representation. In this system a vote is cast in favour of a political party (not a person) and that party will be granted a number of seats on the local council in proportion to the percentage of votes it won. It is up to the party to decide who fills these seats. A ward councillor is directly elected. The residents of a particular ward (also called a district or constituency) within the municipality will cast a ballot for the candidate they want to represent them. In the eThekwini Municipality there are 103 wards and an equal number of ward councillors. There are also 100 PR councillors.

The importance I assigned to a ward councillor was tied to the fact that this person is elected directly by the people in a particular area and is not a political appointee. This (should) mean that the people in that area consider this person to be a credible representative and one who can be trusted to act in their best interests. However, these individuals still represent a political party and it is possible that in some cases people still vote based on party affiliation for their ward councillor rather than personal merit.

This could explain why citizens do not know who their ward councillor is – because in their minds

the individual himself is not as significant as the party that s/he represents. This is what Moodey (2006: 108) was talking about when he referred to the ANC's so-called "broomstick support", meaning that "if you take a broomstick, dress it up and put it forward as an ANC candidate in, for example, Limpopo, it will surely win by a large majority". Moodey (2006: 108) was arguing that regardless of who the candidate is, their party affiliation (in particular, association with the ANC) is enough to secure them a win. His observation partly explains why some citizens cannot name their ward councillor or the particular people in charge, probably because it is the party and not the person that occupies their attention.

The PR model is the one used nationally to elect members of parliament, where political parties are allocated a number of seats in proportion to the total number of votes that were received. The characteristic of this model is that votes are cast for parties, not individuals. It is possible that, since this is the model that dominates at the national level, and that national politics are bound up in the collective psyche with the idea of elections, this model affects how citizens vote at the local level as well. It is possible that when citizens vote for a ward councillor they still vote for the party and not for the candidate because this is what they are accustomed to doing in a national election.

Just 3 out of 10 students at Howard College knew who their ward councillor was. And yet 8 out of ten students were able to name the current minister for Finance. Almond and Verba (1956) posited that even if citizens were not that knowledgeable about politics at the national level, they would be better informed about the situation closer to home. But that was not the case here. I concede that asking just one question about local governance does not provide a total picture of the situation on the ground. But the results of this question still act as a good indicator of a parochial orientation toward local government and the people in charge.

There is reason to suggest that the higher number of students who were able to name the minister of Finance can be attributed to the high profile of this office in the media – one cannot escape hearing of the national budget speech for example, be it on radio, in print or on television. And the reason that far fewer students could name their ward councillor could lie in the fact that these representatives are just not as visible to the people of their district. Or perhaps that the people of the district are not as interested in local governance as they are in national government. Table 7[4] shows that there has been a marked difference between voter turnout for the national and local elections in the eThekwini Municipality during the last two elections. I chose to focus on data for eThekwini in particular since this was where Howard College is located, and the students that were questioned reside for the duration of their studies there. It is clear from the data that people in eThekwini have historically turned out in greater numbers to cast their ballot for national, rather than local, government. This shows that these people are clearly more interested in participating in national elections than in local ones, and that they are not as interested in electing the people who govern the areas where they live. This could be part of the reason that students from the area did not know who their ward councillor was. It is possible that the lack of interest in the local authorities has been passed on to the younger generation because if parents are not interested in local politics and ward councillors then their children are not likely to be exposed to discussion about it at the dinner table.

National Elections		Local Elections	
Year	% Turnout	Year	% Turnout
2014	81.22%	2006	44.18%
2009	78.93%	2011	59.30%

Table 7: Voter turnout in the eThekwini Municipality (Source IEC)

The ward councillor for an area is also the chairperson of the ward committee for that area. A ward committee is composed of a selection of residents from that ward and the purpose of it is to provide recommendations to the council to help it make better decisions on matters affecting the ward

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4   Data was excerpted from the website of the IEC ((http://www.elections.org.za/content/Elections/Election-reports/).

SALGA (2011: 164). The role of the ward councillor in both this instance and in general is to act as a conduit to the council for the expression of the needs and wants of the people from that area. But it is clear from both the low voter turnout figures in eThekwini and the poor results for this question that not all (and in fact very few) citizens are interested in local governance. A possible reason for this could be the alienation that citizens feel when they experience poor (or no) service delivery and hear about cases of corruption by councillors. According to a Municipal IQ report cited by News24 (2014) on April 3, "There have been 48 major service delivery protests against local government since 1 January 2014". Such a large number in so short a span of time points to a real dissatisfaction with the local authorities. In the eThekwini Municipality in particular, the SABC (2012) reported on findings by the Auditor-General that "municipal tenders worth millions [had been] awarded to councillors, employees and their families". This is the kind of thing capable of inciting citizens to protest, or putting them off from voting because it leads to disenchantment with the democratic process. The eThekwini Municipality is ANC controlled, and it has been observed that when citizens who normally vote for the ANC are not happy with them, they would rather abstain from voting altogether than vote for the opposition. This can be attributed to the feeling among some Black South Africans that to vote for a party other than the ANC would be disloyal, because of their role in the struggle for liberation from White minority rule.

Figure 5 shows that between 2010 and 2012 there was in fact a slight increase in the number of students at Howard College who knew who their ward councillor was. In 2010 twenty-two percent of students (or 2 out of 10) could name their ward councillor versus thirty-three percent (or 3 out of 10) in 2012. The increase is marginal but significant because it shows that the situation is not static, despite the fact that the pattern of relative ignorance we have seen remains constant. A possible reason for the slight increase in awareness can be attributed to the fact that 2011 was an election year for municipal elections in which ward councillors would have been chosen. These elections

took place in May 2011 (the next elections are in 2016) and students began being questioned in the latter half of the same year. Thus, awareness could have been boosted by the elections held earlier that year. However if this was the case, then it is somewhat disappointing that the boost received was in fact so small and not greater.

There needs to be a dialogue between the people in charge and the people being governed in order for the system of governance that is in place to function well. SALGA (2011: 177) noted that there needs to be "frequent consultation" between councillors and "community members, ward committee members, [and] organised interest groups". But when more than half of the youth are unaware of who their ward councillor is it is difficult to imagine much dialogue taking place in the future when they come of age.

In the discussion that follows I will examine the results obtained through the filters of age, gender and race to understand and make conclusions about the minority within the sample who knew who their ward councillor was.

Age

Figure 6 provides a comparison by age for 2010 and 2012. It shows how the demographics of those in the know have changed and remained constant between the two studies. In 2010 half of students aged twenty-two knew who their ward councillor was. This was the highest percentage of all other age groups. In 2012 however it was students aged eighteen who claimed top spot, as fifty-six percent of them were able to name their councillor. Figure 6 shows a trend of reversal because the age groups in the top two spots have swapped places between the studies. In 2010 students aged twenty-two ranked first and eighteen-year-olds came second. In 2012 it was the opposite. The other point of interest was that while there has been an increase in the overall number of eighteen-year-

olds who answered yes, the percentage of twenty-two-year-olds who did has remained constant.

Do you know who your Ward Councillor is?
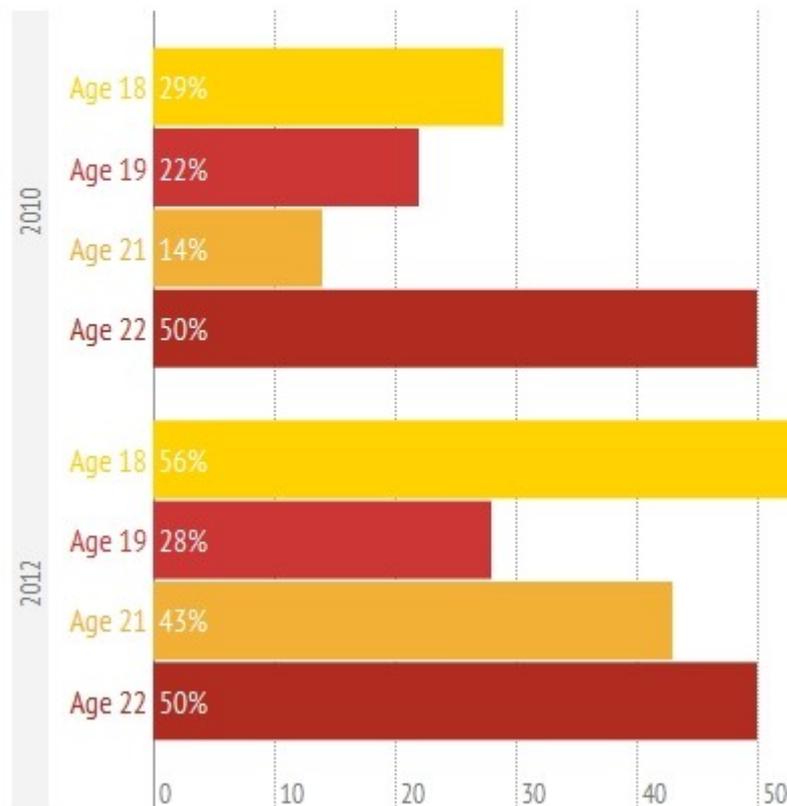
Figure 6: Do you know who your ward councillor is? 2010 vs. 2012 by Age

Gender

Figure 7 shows that in 2010 twenty percent of male students versus twenty-three percent of females knew who their ward councillor was. In 2012 forty percent of males could name their ward councillor versus thirty-one percent of females.

In 2010 the difference between the percentage of male and female students who could name their

ward councillor was minimal (3%). This means that male students only had a slighter better chance than their female peers of being able to name their ward councillor. In 2012 however the difference between the sexes was not so minimal. The overall percentage of male and students who could name their ward councillor grew and male students had a clear majority over females. In 2012 male students were much more likely than females to know who their ward councillor was.
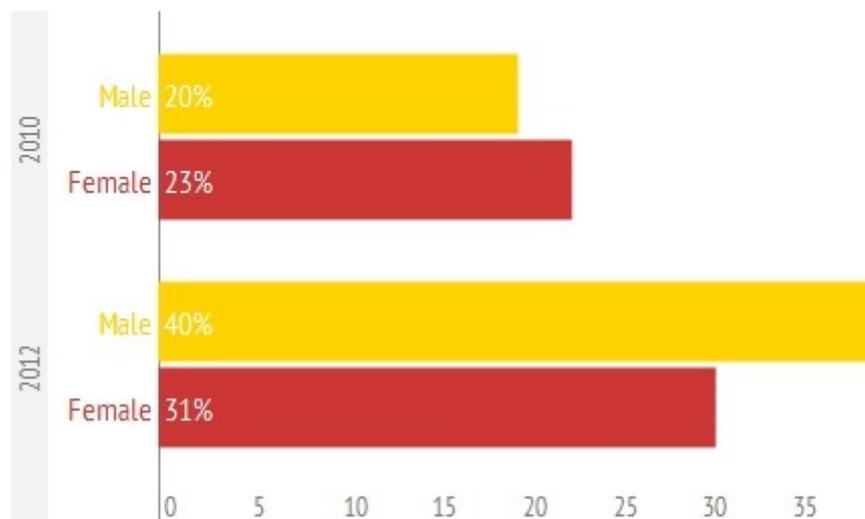
Figure 7: Do you know who you ward councillor is? 2010 vs. 2012 by Gender

Race

Table 8 shows that in 2010 no White students knew who their ward councillor was and Black students more likely to know who their ward councillor was than Indian students. In 2012 Black students continued to have the best chance of knowing who their ward councillor was.

2010			2012		
Black	White	Indian	Black	White	Indian
28.00%	0	20.00%	47.00%	25.00%	28.00%

Table 8: Do you know who your ward councillor is? 2010 vs. 2012 by Race group

In 2010 no White students knew who their ward councillor was, but in 2012 twenty-five percent of them did. This constituted a slight improvement. The number of Indian students who could name their ward councillor grew from twenty percent in 2010 to twenty-eight percent in 2012. This was an improvement, but not as great as the increase in Black students which was nineteen percent.

Interest in Public Affairs

I wanted to determine if there was a link between having an interest in public affairs and being more knowledgeable about it. There was. I found that students who knew who their ward councillor was were the same ones who answered yes to following public affairs in the media and discussing public affairs and political scandals with other people. Table 9 shows evidence of this relationship.

Follow Public Affairs in the Media	Discuss Public Affairs and Political Scandals
82.00%	76.00%

Table 9: Do you know who your ward councillor is? A comparison of results by interest in public affairs

The Role of the President

In the third of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the political system I chose to focus on the office of the state President. In Question 4 students were asked, "What does the state President do?" This was an open ended question and students could provide their answer in the space provided. I decided it was important to ask this question because as the head of state and government, the President of the Republic is a figure of immense importance who wields a great deal of power. Indeed the whole notion of "elections" is bound up with who will become President. But are the citizenry properly educated about what the job of the President entails? I wanted to find out if the youth had the right idea about the role of the President and his duties.

In this question sixty-three percent of students were able to provide a correct answer regarding the

President's exact job. Sixteen percent of students did not attempt the question and eleven percent failed. The method I used for this question was to interpret the answers given in terms of both common practice and what the Constitution of the Republic states about the duties of the President. If an answer given corresponded with what the Constitution said, then I ascribed a Pass. If an answer did not correspond, I considered that a Fail.
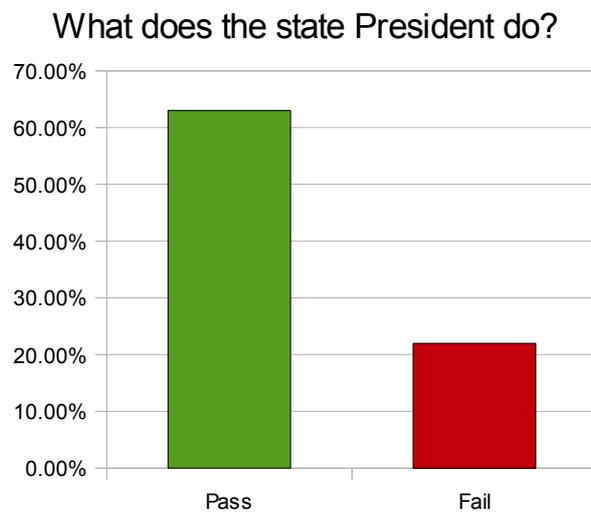
Figure 8:

Table 10 represents the responses given to this question by each student in the sample and Table 11 shows how the response was judged and graded. If a response consisted of more than one sentence and one sentence was incorrect and one was correct then I still ascribed a Pass to that answer.

Participant ID	What does the state President do?
1	He is the head of the executive branch of the government.
2	He leads that particular state
3	Elects candidates. Makes decisions.
4	Run the state
5	Govern the country

6	Govern the country
7	Govern the country, practice government policy
8	runs the state
9	No answer
10	Runs the cabinet and issues regarding the country
11	He governs our country and passes legislation
12	Makes important decisions
13	No answer
14	The president ensures that all political systems run efficiently
15	He manages the country's affairs
16	Overviews all policies and legislations and signs them
17	Zuma - nothing
18	Insures political system in SA is kept intact
19	Ensures that all the political systems run properly
20	runs the state
21	Nothing as far as I'm concerned
22	Runs the state
23	in charge of decisions made in the country
24	No answer
25	oversees the running of the country
26	RUNS THE COUNTRY
27	nothing
28	He has the roles of President which must be performed, sametime (sic) exercising his power as head of state and other times in conjunction with the relevant ministers.
29	Travel the world
30	Governs the country by managing a hierarchy of ministers. makes business deals with other countries
31	Governs all state affairs
32	In control of state affairs
33	ensure ministers implement policy. take part in parliament and policy-making
34	manage financial and basic resources
35	the state president is in charge of the cabinet
36	Head of State. Head of the Executive.
37	If laws are to be passed the President will agree, does not make the laws though
38	Not much

39	He enjoys making relations with other women, building new houses and travelling to other countries and making friends with other dictators under the heading of foreign affairs.
40	He chairs in parliament and helps regulate rules and regulations for and by the state.
41	No answer
42	represent the country worldwide and work with its board members to provide for the country
43	No answer
44	Create better opportunities for citizens. Makes sure that all ministers and development services deliver the basic needs to the citizens.
45	No answer
46	Improve social life by providing help where is needed the most
47	I have no idea
48	Makes decisions about the important issues concerning the country
49	No answer
50	No answer
51	Ensure that all spheres of government runs as planned.

Table 10: What does the state President do? All responses

Participant ID	Interpretation of Response
1	Correct
2	Vague but not inaccurate
3	First part is false. Second part is too general, but essentially correct.
4	A bit broad, but true
5	A bit broad, but true
6	A bit broad, but true
7	Governs, yes. If practice = implement then latter is correct too
8	A bit broad, but true
9	No answer
10	Runs the cabinet, but latter part too broad to be meaningful
11	Governs, yes. But Parliament passes legislation
12	A bit broad, but true
13	No answer
14	Not clear what is meant by political systems. Too vague to be meaningful
15	Broad, but correct
16	YES – he signs bills

17	Reveals bias
18	Not really
19	Not really
20	For all intents and purposes, yes
21	Reveals bias
22	For all intents and purposes, yes
23	In the sense that he assents to bills, yes. But this definition is too broad
24	No answer
25	Broad, but correct
26	Broad, but correct
27	Reveals bias
28	Vague but not inaccurate
29	Representing the country abroad is just one aspect of his duties
30	Correct
31	Correct
32	Correct
33	Correct
34	In the sense that he delegates these responsibilities to cabinet which he is in charge of
35	Correct
36	Correct
37	Correct
38	Reveals bias
39	Reveals bias
40	NOT the chair in parliament. Latter part not precise enough.
41	No answer
42	He does represent the country, but so do other Ministers when abroad. A country does not have board members.
43	No answer
44	First part is sentimental, but can be admitted. The latter is also acceptable, in a broad sense.
45	No answer
46	Too general and sentimental
47	No answer
48	Too general, but essentially correct
49	No answer
50	No answer
51	In the sense that he delegates these responsibilities to cabinet which he is in charge of

Table 11: What does the state President do? Interpretation of Responses

Sixty-three percent of students at Howard College were correct about what the President's job entails. This figure was significant because it is above the fifty percent mark and means that a healthy majority were well informed about this aspect of their political system. I wanted to go deeper to determine the demographic composition of the well informed sixty-three percent to find out if there was a pattern that underlies who knew and who didn't. In the discussion that follows I will look at the results obtained through the filters of age, gender and race.

Age

Figure 9 shows that more than half (and significantly more than half in some cases) of all age groups represented in the sample could provide an accurate assessment of what the President actually "does" in terms of his job. There was one age group where only twenty-five percent of students could accurately state what the President does and this was those aged twenty-two. It was heartening to note that clear majorities from each age group (except the one mentioned) were knowledgeable about the responsibilities of the office of the President since this should factor into their votes at election time. If the electorate do not know what it is the President does then it is not realistic to expect them to be able to benchmark an incumbent's performance. It appears as if the youth (with the exception of twenty-two-year-olds) share the same interest in the office of the President.

What does the President do?
Results filtered by Age
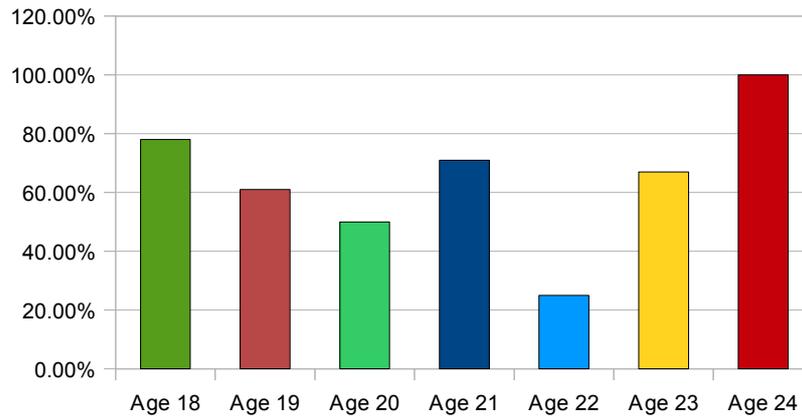
Figure 9:

Gender

Figure 10 shows that more than half of both males and females were able to provide an accurate account of what it is the President's job entails. However, males were better informed than females. Eighty percent of male students compared to fifty-six of female students gave a correct answer. This supports the notion that men are better informed about politics than women, but that there are some issues that men and women will be both be interested in.

What does the state President do?
Results filtered by Gender
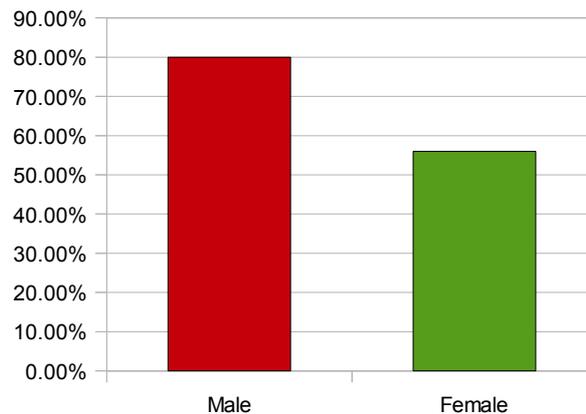
Figure 10:

Race

Table 12 shows that one race group was much better informed about the role that the President plays in running the country, and this was the Indians. Seventy-two percent of Indian students provided a correct answer to this question, compared to half of White students and just forty-seven percent of Black students. It is interesting to note that the ruling African National Congress (ANC) draws much (if not all) of its support from the Black majority, but fifty-three percent of Black youth (who represent the future electorate) do not know what it is the President does.

Black	Indian	White
47.00%	72.00%	50.00%

Table 12: What does the state President do? Results by Race group

Interest in Public Affairs

I found that the students who were able to provide a correct answer about the President's responsibilities were the same ones who were followed public affairs in the media and discussed public affairs and political scandals with other people. Evidence of this is shown in Table 13. This underscores the link between taking an active interest in politics and public affairs and in being an informed citizen.

Follow Public Affairs in the Media	Discuss Public Affairs and Political Scandals
82.00%	76.00%

Table 13: What does the state President do? Comparison of results by Interest in Public Affairs

The Distinction between State and Government

In the last of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the political system I chose to focus on the distinction between state and government. In Question 5 students were faced with three statements related to this and had to indicate whether each one was either True or False.

Almond and Powell (1973: 34) stressed the distinction between the state apparatus (or "regime" as

Almond and Powell refer to it) and the political authorities, the people who hold positions within it. This is because while interrelated, the two are distinct. It is important that citizens grasp this fact to avoid confusion about the workings of the political system. The meaning of the word "state" as I use it here is intended to refer to "the mechanisms of government and the institutions of the state" Heywood (2002: 26). This definition is meant to encompass the institutional structure which includes different departments and agencies which perform different functions. The political authorities are the individuals who occupy positions in these state departments and agencies. This can include both political appointees and civil servants. It is clear that what Almond and Powell (1973) wanted was for citizens to understand the difference between the state and the departments and agencies of which it is comprised on the one hand, and the people in charge of it on the other. And what this equates to in practice is the distinction between state and government.

It is important that individuals are able to make this distinction for several reasons. The first reason is that the state and the government are two distinct yet interrelated entities. The state represents the interests of all the people of the land. But the government is represented by a political party that has been elected to power through a majority vote. The state is fixed but the government that is in charge of running it can be replaced in the next election. It is possible for the boundaries between state and government to blur over time in the minds of the people. An example of this is the ANC's policy of cadre deployment, where politically connected party members are appointed to positions within the state on the basis of their loyalty rather than competence. I assessed whether or not the youth were able to differentiate between state and government based on their ability to correctly identify the different roles and duties associated with state and government.

Table 14 shows whether each statement was True or False and the percentage of students that chose the correct answer. In each case more than half of all students chose the correct option when

confronted with the choice of True or False. The response obtained for each statement was well above the 50% mark and this is a positive sign because it reflects that at a basic level the youth were able to differentiate between state and government. It is interesting to note that earlier, students could not name more than one national minister when given a choice of three alternatives, but here were able to achieve a score of three out of three when confronted with a far more abstract question. However, attention must be drawn to the fact that while the response rate, while greater than fifty percent, was not one hundred percent. This means that there were pockets of parochials in the student population who were not able to tell the difference between the duties of state and government.

Statement	True or False	% Correct
Teachers in public schools are paid for by the state	TRUE	86.00%
Salaries for government workers are paid for by the ANC	FALSE	78.00%
Roads are built by the party in charge of government	FALSE	69.00%

Table 14: The distinction between State and Government

The questions that I used here were a basic measure. The purpose of this section of the instrument was to gauge how well informed students were and not to explore their feelings. For this reason I chose to use examples of simple situations in favour of more nuanced or complicated ones that could be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

Table 14 shows that that just two percent of the sample (one student) could not correctly state True or False for even one of the statements. But a little over half of all students (53%) were able to correctly judge all three statements. This means that in general the youth were able to tell the

difference between state and government, but it appears that some were better at doing so than others. At the bottom end of the scale sixteen percent of the sample (8 students) were able to correctly judge at least one of the statements. At the minimum, this indicates a basic interest in politics and government. The true parochial (which is rare) would probably have no concept of the difference between state and government. This is the reason that only one student in the sample could not judge the veracity of the statements at all. My conclusion here therefore is that the basic interest in politics and government which this points to is in fact evidence of a weak parochial orientation.

I wanted to find out more about the exact composition of the sub-group within the sample that could correctly evaluate all three statements. If five in ten students had a better grasp than their peers of the differences between the state and government I wanted to find out what factors were responsible for this and applied the filters of age, gender and race to the responses for this sub-group.

Age

Figure 11 shows that seventy-two percent of people aged twenty-two correctly evaluated all three statements relating to the difference between state and government. It is interesting to note that at least fifty percent of each age group represented in the sample was able to correctly evaluate all three statements, except for two: nineteen-year-olds and twenty-three-year-olds. It appears as if twenty-two-year-olds who were at the more mature end of the scale had the greatest appreciation for the distinction between state and government. This could be attributed in part to their more prolonged exposure to politics and public affairs than their younger peers. But if this is the case then it is puzzling why more twenty-three and twenty-four-year-old students did not do better on this set of questions.

The Distinction Between State and Government
Results filtered by Age
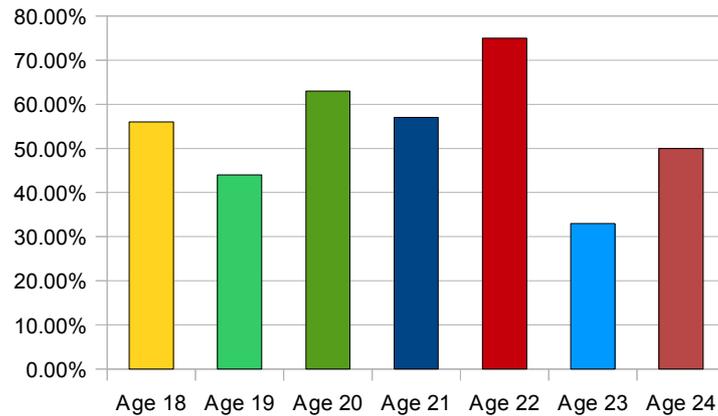
Figure 11:

Gender

Figure 12 shows that male students could differentiate between state and government better than their female counterparts. Seventy-three percent of males correctly evaluated each statement in comparison to just forty-four percent of females. It is of note that less than half of female students could tell the difference between state and government by accurately assessing the given statements in terms of True or False, when the overwhelming majority of male students could do so. This adds to the evidence of a clear divide between males and females in terms of how much is known about politics and government.

The Distinction between State and Government

Results filtered by Gender
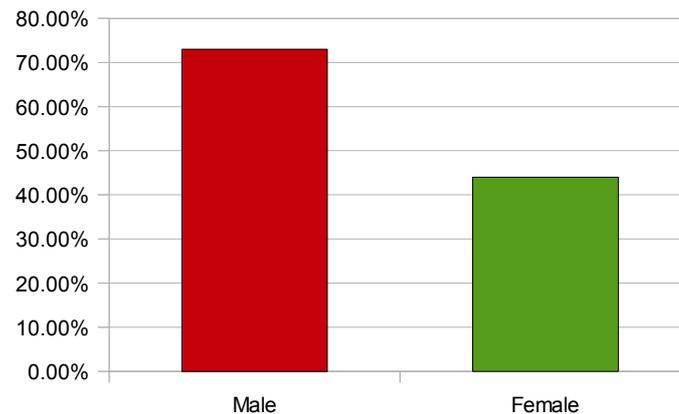
Figure 12:

Race

Table 15 shows that fifty-six of Indian students and fifty percent of White students were able to accurately evaluate the truth of each statement, in contrast to forty-seven percent of Black students. This means that fifty-three percent of Black students were not able to properly tell the difference between state and government. The youth in general represent the future electorate but it is the Black vote and the attitudes and knowledge upon which it is based that will decide who wins and loses in South African politics. If voters do not learn how the political system functions it leaves them open to misinformation and manipulation. A good example of this is the statement that was made by ANC member and KwaZulu-Natal agriculture MEC Meshack Radebe in the run up to the 2014 national elections. The MEC was quoted as saying, "Nxamalala [Zuma] has increased grants, but there are people who are stealing them by voting for opposition parties," SAPA (2014). A statement like this from a government official (with all the authority of his office) makes it sound as if social grants are a boon from the President himself, and to support an opposition party is to forfeit your right to one. This is not the case and it is interesting to note that this comment was made in the presence of President Zuma himself – who is not reported to have corrected the MEC when he

spoke. In truth social grants are funded by the state from the taxes that it receives. According to SAPA (2014) "Radebe, who was previously the province's social development MEC, warned those who wanted to vote for other parties to "stay away from the grant"." If people do not understand the distinction between state and government statements like those made by MEC Radebe can confuse and dupe them into believing that they must support the ANC to receive benefits that are theirs irrespective of which party is in charge of government.

Black	Indian	White
47.00%	56.00%	50.00%

Table 15: The distinction between State and Government. Results by Race group

Interest in Public Affairs

I found that the students who could differentiate best between state and government were the same ones who followed public affairs in the media and discussed public affairs and political scandals with other people. This is shown in Table 16.

Follow Public Affairs in the Media	Discuss Public Affairs and Political Scandals
81.00%	78.00%

Table 16: The distinction between State and Government. Comparison of results by interest in public affairs

Conclusion

I used a set of four questions to test students' knowledge of the System level of politics in South Africa. The outcome of the test was that students passed two of the four questions, to achieve a score of fifty percent for this part of the test. In the section that follows I will provide a brief summary of the results that were obtained.

First, I wanted to measure how well informed youth at Howard College were about who the people in charge of national government are. This question comprised three items and students were asked to match a key national portfolio with the correct minister in charge, from a list of three alternatives. The result was that students were able to associate the correct minister with just one portfolio. This means that the sample failed this question. I concluded that students at Howard College were under-informed, but not un-informed, about the authorities in charge of national government.

In the second of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the people in charge of government I chose to focus on governance at the local level, and asked them if they knew who their ward councillor was. Just thirty-three percent of students did know and were able to provide the name and party affiliation of their ward councillor. This means that the sample failed this question.

In the third of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the political system I chose to focus on the office of the state President, and in an open ended question asked students to describe what they thought the job of the President entailed. Sixty-three percent of students were able to provide a correct answer. This was the first question relating to the System level that students at Howard College passed.

In the last of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the political system I chose to focus on the distinction between state and government. In Question 5 of Section A students were faced with three statements related to this and had to indicate whether each was True or False. Significantly more than half of all students questioned were able to correctly evaluate each statement. This means that the sample passed this question.

In the results for each question I found that the students who were able to provide the correct answer were the same ones who reported following public affairs in the media and admitted to discussing public affairs and political scandals with other people.

The Process Level

The System level focused on the institutional structure of the state and on the people in charge of the political system. In this section I will deal with issues relating to the political process. It is concerned with what people in a political system know, feel and think about themselves as actors in the political process, and other political groups such as parties and interest groups Almond (1990: 17). I devised a set of four questions that would test what the youth know about how the political system in South Africa functions. If this chapter was a civics class, then lesson one would focus on the System level and learning what the system consists of. This would be lesson two- learning how the system operates and the processes that underpin it.

Party Leaders

In the first question I designed to test students' knowledge of the political process in South Africa, I asked them to name the leaders of three key political parties. In Question 2, students were asked to select the name of the correct party leader in the same way that they identified the national ministers in Question 1.

It might appear as if there is no point in asking people to name the leaders of the better known parties since it is expected that everyone will know the answer. But I would contend that it is important to ask this question just to prove the point that everyone in fact does. It is important to monitor whether or not a population is able to name the leader of the larger, more important parties because this knowledge reflects a basic engagement with politics and exposure to events. It is one

thing not to know who the Minister for Basic Education is, but to not know that Jacob Zuma is the president of the ruling party is quite another. So in other words, I asked this question to establish that the youth do not have their heads stuck in the sand when it comes to contemporary events.

In a democracy political parties provide representation for the different people in society as well as the range of different interests that these people can have. For example representing class based interests and worker's rights, or so-called green issues such as protecting the environment. People can even choose to organise politically around areas such as a shared language and culture, or religion and race. It is therefore important for ordinary citizens to be aware of who the different parties are and the people who lead them, in order to make an informed choice which one to support or join.

Figure 13 shows that close to one hundred percent of students were able to name the leaders of the ANC, Democratic Alliance (DA) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). There was no doubt in anyone's mind that Jacob Zuma was the leader of the ANC since one hundred percent of students named him as party leader. But a fraction of those questioned were under the impression that Patricia de Lille was the leader of the DA. However this was a small number, just six percent of students. But it shows that there is a pocket (albeit a small one) of ignorance among the youth when it comes to issues that concern national politics. There was also a small pocket of students who believed that Zanele Magwaza-Msibi was leader of the IFP.

Naming Party Leaders
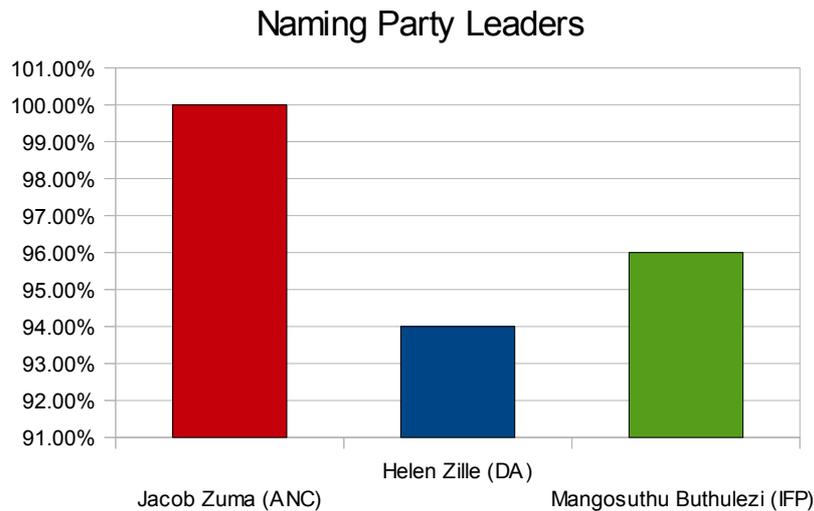
Figure 13:

The fact that these numbers approach one hundred percent indicate that knowledge of the people in charge is not affected by age, gender or race since (nearly) everyone questioned could supply the correct answer.

The Constitution

In the second of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the South African political process I chose to focus on the Constitution of the Republic. The Constitution is in effect the political rule book that provides the guidelines for government to operate and politicians to politic. It defines the structure of the state, establishes a separation of powers and provides a set of rules that determine how all other rules are made. This means that any decision to amend the Constitution will have important consequences for the political process that this set of rules governs. I wanted to find out if South African youth were aware of what would be needed to change the Constitution. I found that just over half of them (55%) did know.

Figure 14 shows that in 2010 just thirty-three percent of students questioned at Howard College knew the significance of a party having a two-thirds majority in parliament. In 2012 this increased

to fifty-five percent. It is important that the youth (and citizens in general, for that matter) have some idea of both the importance of the Constitution and what it takes to amend it. For example, one of the things that Constitution governs is the number of terms the President of the Republic can serve. At present that number is two. But it can be changed to allow the same person to serve more than twice and there are international precedents for this happening. In Russia for example, after serving the maximum allowed two terms, President Putin took up the position of Prime Minister until the Russian parliament extended the time that could be spent in office as president to three terms – and then he ran (and won) again. A simple majority in parliament allows a single party to pass through whatever legislation what it wants (within reason) without having to court the support of the opposition. But a two-thirds majority can enable the kind of sweeping changes that keep a President in office far longer than is reasonable (consider President Mugabe in Zimbabwe who has run for election in every election since independence) or that strip citizens of their civil liberties.

What does it mean when a party has a two-thirds majority in parliament?
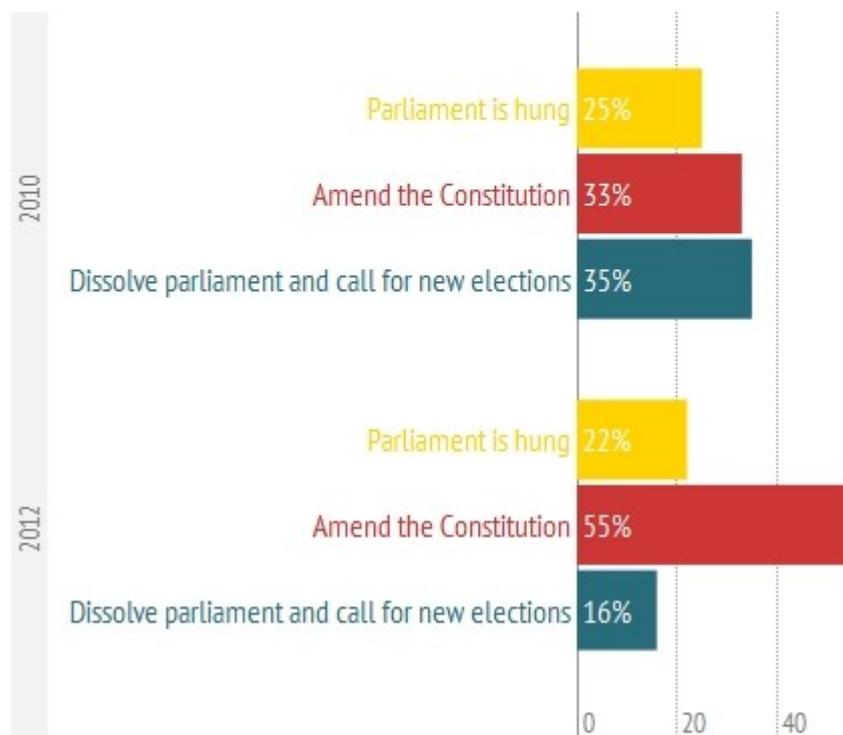
Figure 14:

Early in 2014 (an election year) on the occasion of the ANC's 102nd birthday celebrations, as part of his address to supporters in KaNyamazane, President Zuma said:

> We want a huge majority this time because we want to change certain things that couldn't be changed with a small majority so that we move forward because there are certain hurdles. The Times cited in (News24: 2014)

This was evidence that the ANC were mulling amendments to the Constitution, which means that

this was a good question to put to the youth. If one of the five in ten students at Howard College who chose the correct answer to this question heard this statement, then they would understand that the majority being spoken of was a two-thirds majority in parliament. And that the changes being spoken of related to the Constitution.

I wanted to find out more about the sub-group of students who were able to grasp the importance of what having a two-thirds majority in parliament means, and applied the filters of age, gender and race to the results I obtained.

Age

Figure 15 shows that twenty-four-year-olds were the best informed age group, since one hundred percent of them could supply the correct answer to this question. This can be attributed to their mature age and more prolonged exposure to public affairs and politics in the media and through discussion with other people. There were two age groups where less than half knew the correct answer to this question, eighteen-year-olds and twenty-one-year-olds. Eighteen-year-olds might not be as politically savvy as their older peers and this can explain the reason this cohort is not aware of the significance of a two-thirds parliamentary majority for the political process. Forty-three percent of twenty-one-year-olds did know the significance and this is greater than the eleven percent of eighteen-year-olds, which lead me to conclude that twenty-one-year-olds obtained a relative benefit from their age. But are perhaps not as interested in or oriented toward matters relating to politics as their older peers.

What does it mean when a party has a two-thirds majority in parliament?
Results filtered by Age
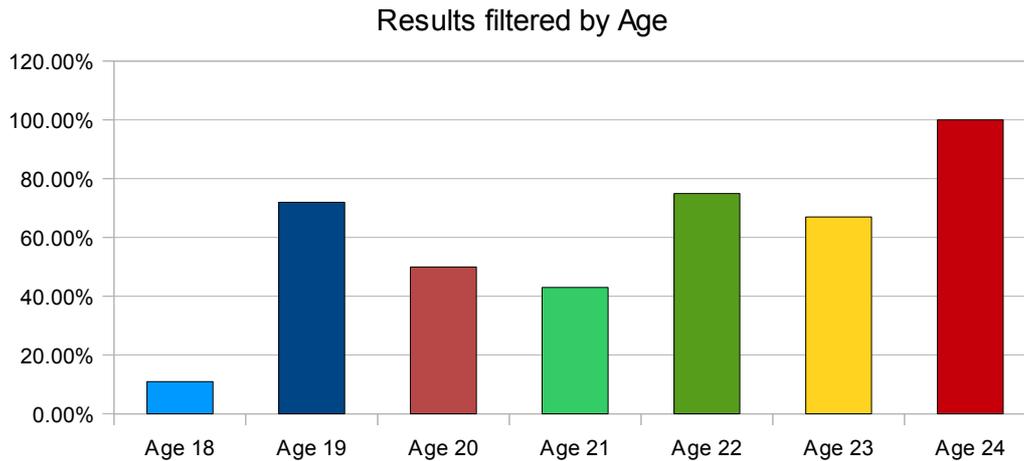
Figure 15:

Gender

Figure 16 shows that sixty-seven percent of male students knew what it takes to amend the Constitution, compared to half of all females. This shows that male students were better informed about this aspect of the political process than their female peers, and provides more support for the idea of a gender gap in terms of knowledge of politics. However it is heartening to note that in this case the significant mark of fifty percent has at least been reached, meaning that a critical mass of young females understand what it takes to change the Constitution. So while females are informed about the more so-called "big ticket" issues in politics such as what it takes to alter the Constitution, they are just not as informed as their male counterparts.

What does it mean when a party has a two-thirds majority in parliament?
Results filtered by Gender
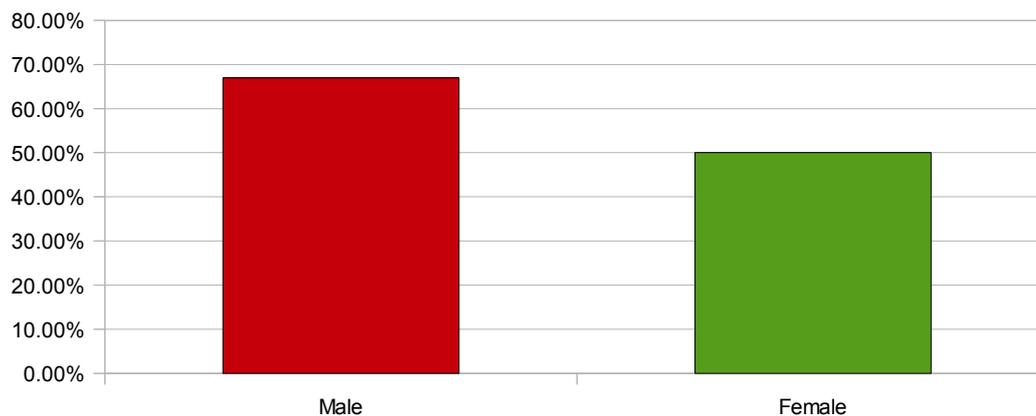
Figure 16:

Race

Table 17 shows that little more than half of both Black and Indian students (53%) were familiar with what a two-thirds majority means. The results show that White students best understood the significance of the question, with seventy-five percent of all students from this age group selecting the correct answer.

Black	Indian	White
53.00%	53.00%	75.00%

Table 17: What does it mean when a party has a two-thirds majority in parliament? Results by Race group

Interest in Public Affairs

Table 18 shows that the students who knew that a political party needs a two-thirds majority in parliament in order to change the Constitution were the same students who followed public affairs in the media and discussed public affairs and political scandals with other people.

Follow Public Affairs in the Media	Discuss Public Affairs and Political Scandals
82.00%	71.00%

Table 18: What does it mean when a party has a two-thirds majority in parliament? Comparison of results by interest in public affairs

Electoral Process

In the third of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the political process in South Africa, I chose to focus on the electoral process in particular. The National Assembly is composed of members of parliament (MPs) who were elected during the national elections. Using a system of proportional representation, political parties are allotted a number of seats in the National Assembly (parliament) in proportion to the number of votes they won. According to van Zyl Slabbert (2005: 41):

> Under the closed-list PR electoral model, local committees or branches of the various political parties put forward possible candidates, but it is the party bosses who determine which candidates will get in the lists (and in what position), and it is on that basis that members of Parliament (MPs) are chosen.

It is up to the parties, and party bosses in particular, to decide to who fills these seats. This is an important fact. But Figure 17 shows that just eight percent of youth at Howard College (4 students) were aware of it. It might not seem like an important piece of information, but it has one important implication. This is that since MPs are not voted for directly by citizens, but by party bosses, their allegiance will inevitably be to the people who put them there and have the power to remove them: the party "big wigs". Yes, the branches of the party can submit the names of candidates for the list, but the people who ultimately decided which candidates will get on the list, and therefore sit in the National Assembly, are not ordinary voters. There are people who don't have a problem with this. And then there are those who would call this process flawed because it renders elected

representatives unaccountable to the people who elected them in the first place. But in order to have an opinion, and pitch a tent in either camp, first one has to know this is what happens.
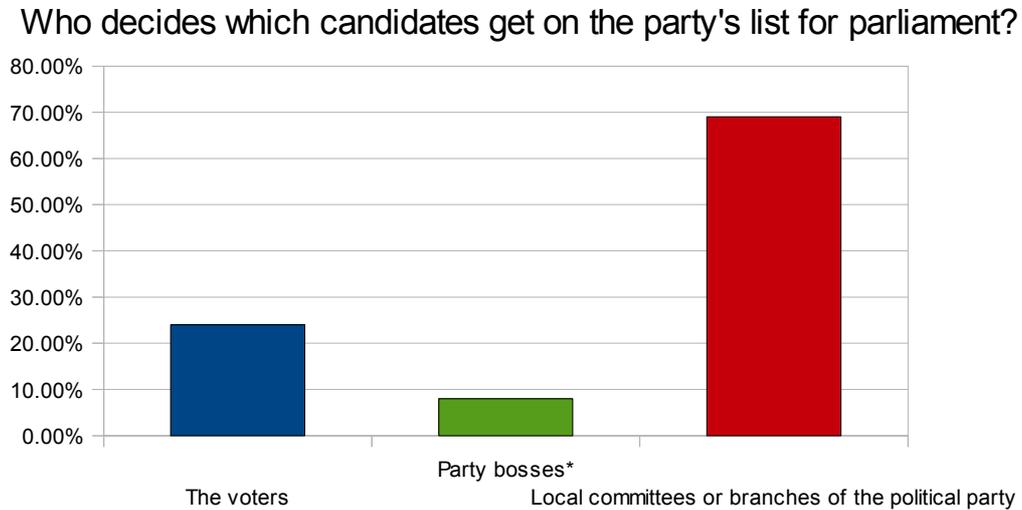
Figure 17:

Van Zyl Slabbert (2005: 42) made a case for electoral reform in 2002 as chairman of a Cabinet task team appointed to explore alternatives to the current electoral system, which was ignored by the then government. He cited the problem of accountability with the current closed-list PR model which governs how candidates becomes MPs and suggested a constituency based multiple-member proportional (MMP) system. This would mean that:

> ...the country is divided into 70 constituencies and that each constituency cannot have less than three or more than seven representatives. Those representatives must, however, be recommended from that constituency; they come on to a list, but they are accountable to a particular constituency Van Zyl Slabbert (2005: 43).

One of the chief characteristics of a democratic system is the presence of alternatives. But if citizens do not know how things are already done to begin with, it is unlikely that they will be able to

identify flaws in the process and look for other alternatives.

The oversight role of parliament in checking the Executive is open to debate due to the overwhelming majority that the ruling ANC enjoys in the National Assembly. This majority means that the ANC does not have to co-operate with other parties to pass or block legislation and that members of the party will dominate the portfolio committees that perform the real work of parliament. This means that the power of opposition MPs is limited. The power of ANC MPs as individuals is also open to debate since these representatives are compelled to vote the party's position rather than their own conscience because the power to remove them lies with the party. However, it is still important for citizens to understand how candidates get elected to parliament because of the role that they nonetheless play in the legislature. In addition, MPs receive substantial remuneration at the tax payers' expense and enjoy a range of perks that come with the job.

The Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers (2013: 11) recommended that members of the National Assembly receive a 4% pay increase in 2013, to swell their pay packets from R889 383 to R924 958. MPs sit on portfolio committees which make recommendations about legislation, and vote for or against pieces of legislation. But just eight percent of the future electorate understand the process which puts these people in parliament. The implication of this is a generation of voters who cast their ballot with no understanding of what the action translates to.

I wanted to find out more about the small sub-group of students who understood how MPs are chosen. I applied the filters of age, gender and race to the results to find if there were was a pattern to the responses.

Age

Table 19 shows that only students aged eighteen, nineteen and twenty-one could provide the correct answer. I found this counter- intuitive since I expected that older students would be better informed for the reason that they've been around longer and would had more time to get informed and been more exposed to politics. The fact that a greater percentage of students aged twenty-one supports this expectation to an extent, since this a special age where students are on the cusp of young adulthood.

Age 18	Age 19	Age 21
11.00%	6.00%	29.00%

Table 19: Who decides which candidates get on the party's list for parliament? Results by age.

Gender

Table 20 shows that more male students than females understood how MPs are chosen. This supports the trend I have reported on thus far, of men being better informed about politics than females.

Male	Female
20.00%	3.00%

Table 20: Who decides which candidates get on the party's list for parliament? Results by Age

Race

Table 21 shows that no White students answered correctly, but that seven percent of Black students and nine percent of Indian students knew the correct answer.

Black	Indian	White
7.00%	9.00%	0.00%

Table 21: Who decides which candidates get on the party's list for parliament? Results by Race

group

Interest in Public Affairs

Table 22 shows that one hundred percent of students who knew the correct answer followed public affairs in the media and half of them discussed public affairs and political scandals with other people.

Follow Public Affairs in the Media	Discuss Public Affairs and Political Scandals
100.00%	50.00%

Table 22: Who decides which candidates get on the party's list for parliament? Comparison of results by interest in public affairs

The Tripartite Alliance

In the last of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the political process in South Africa I chose to focus on the tripartite alliance. The tripartite alliance consists of three groups: the ANC, South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The impact of this alliance on South African politics and the South African political process is immense. It reflects the historic partnership between these bodies during the fight against white minority rule and the continued solidarity between them in the present. The tripartite alliance is not a formal body of the state nor is COSATU a political party that has a seat in parliament. But both the SACP and COSATU have the power to interfere in the political process and block legislation that does not suit them because of their close relationship with the ANC. One example of this was the proposed youth wage subsidy that was announced by then Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan in his 200? budget speech. It had the support of the ANC but COSATU had misgivings about it on the grounds that the bill would make it more attractive to employ younger workers and this would force older people out. Despite a push by the DA in favour of the legislation, it was stalled, because the ANC's ally COSATU had a problem with it. The youth wage subsidy has since become law, but the delay in this happening can be attributed to the pressure applied to the ANC by COSATU as a result of their alliance. In addition, the endorsement of the ANC by COSATU means

that the union members it represents will support them at the polls. It is therefore important that ordinary citizens are aware of how the tripartite alliance influences South African politics, and how the support of the alliance helps the ANC at the polls.

Just eight percent of youth at Howard College (4 students) knew who both the ANC's alliance partners were. But twenty-four percent (12 students) could correctly name at least one. The tripartite alliance has a demonstrated power to affect the political process but just eight percent of this sample of the future voters of this country knew who they were. COSATU and the SACP campaign on behalf of the ANC and trade union support is an important part of the ANC's victories to date. Figure 18 shows that twenty-seven percent of students could not name one of the two members of the alliance and that forty-one percent did not attempt the question.
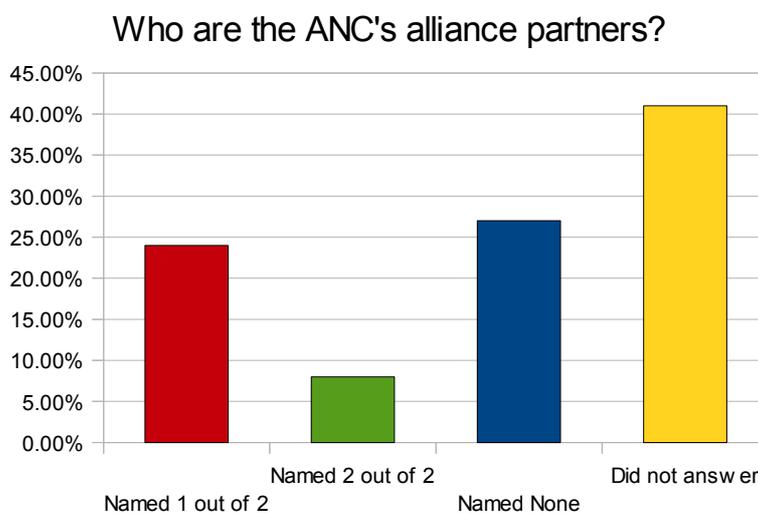
Figure 18:

Age

Table 23 shows that just three of the age groups represented in the sample feature in the sub-group of those well informed enough to be able to name both of the ANC's alliance partners. These were students aged nineteen, twenty-three and twenty-four. I would have expected more students aged

twenty-three and twenty-four to know the answer to this question relative to their younger peers based on the fact that the older students would have been exposed to politics over a (comparatively) longer period of time. But in fact there were two nineteen-year-old students who could name both alliance partners, in comparison to just one each from the twenty-three and twenty-four-year old age groups. This points to an interesting trend: that age might not have the positive effect I expected on being more knowledgeable about politics, because while it is true that older students do appear to be better informed in some cases, the eighteen and nineteen-year-old students were more knowledgeable than their more mature peers.

Age 19	Age 23	Age 24
11.00%	33.00%	50.00%

Table 23: Who are the ANC's Alliance partners? Results by Age

Gender

Table 24 confirms that the trend that we have seen thus far, that male students were better informed about politics in general than their female counterparts. But in this case it is all relative because despite the fact that a greater percentage of all male students performed better on this question than females, it was still a small percentage of them as a whole who could give the right answer. So in this case males in general are almost as unenlightened as female students.

Male	Female
13.00%	6.00%

Table 24: Who are the ANC's Alliance partners? Results by Gender

Race

Table 25 shows that just thirteen percent of Black students and six percent of Indian students were able to provide the correct answer to this question. This indicates that both race groups are woefully under informed about who makes up the tripartite alliance, but that Black students are only just

marginally better informed than Indian students. It is significant that not one White student was able to name both the ANC's alliance partners.

Black	Indian	White
13.00%	6.00%	0.00%

Table 25: Who are the ANC's Alliance partners? Results by race group

Interest in Public Affairs

Table 26 shows that all of the students who were able to name both of the ANC's alliance partners both followed public affairs in the media and expressed a willingness to discuss public affairs and political scandals with other people.

Follow Public Affairs in the Media	Discuss Public Affairs and Political Scandals
100.00%	100.00%

Table 26: Who are the ANC's Alliance partners? Comparison of results by interest in public affairs

Conclusion

I used a set of four questions to test students' knowledge of the Process level of politics in South Africa. The outcome of the test was that students passed two of the four questions, to achieve a score of fifty percent for this part of the test. In the section that follows I will provide a brief summary of the results that were obtained.

In the first question I designed to test students' knowledge of the political process in South Africa I asked them to name the leaders of three key political parties. Close to one hundred percent of students were able to name the leaders of the ANC, DA and IFP. This means that the sample passed this question.

In the second of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the South African political

process I chose to focus on the Constitution of the Republic. I tested whether youth at Howard College knew that the magic number of a two-thirds majority would be needed in a vote in parliament to amend the Constitution. Fifty-five percent of the students questioned knew this and that means the sample passed this question.

In the third of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the political process in South Africa, I chose to focus on the electoral process in particular. I wanted to test whether students knew the process by which a candidate becomes an MP. Just eight percent of students were able to select the correct answer. This means that the sample failed this question.

In the last of the four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the political process in South Africa I chose to focus on the tripartite alliance. I found that only eight of students at Howard College knew who the two groups were that formed part of the tripartite alliance with the ANC. This means that the sample failed this question.

In the results for each question I found that the students who were able to provide the correct answer were the same ones who reported following public affairs in the media and admitted to discussing public affairs and political scandals with other people.

The Policy Level

This aspect of political culture focuses on "the patterns of orientations toward public policies" Almond and Powell (1978: 39). The first two levels of the political system I discussed dealt with the people in charge of government and the distinction between state and government, and the political process. The third and final level of the political system is concerned with the outputs of the system, the policies both domestic and foreign that are adopted by the government.

In the first of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of public policy , I chose to focus on the branch of the government that was responsible for the implementation of public policy in South Africa. In a multiple choice question that listed the Judiciary, Executive and Legislature as possible options, I asked students to pick the one that was responsible for the design and implementation of public policy in South Africa. Figure 19 shows that eighteen percent of those questioned, in fact just nine students, named the Executive as the correct answer. This is shocking. More than half of students (59%) picked the Legislature and a possible reason for this is that since this branch of the government is responsible for passing laws, it appears in their minds to be responsible for implementing them as well. This is incorrect. It is the task of the Executive which is composed of the President and his cabinet of ministers each with their own portfolio (Health and Basic Education for example) which is responsible for implementing what the Legislature has passed.

I would liken not knowing the correct duties and functions of each branch of government to the political equivalent of not being able differentiate one's foot from one's elbow. This is such a basic aspect of government that would one expect it to be part of the collective general knowledge. A separation of powers between the different branches of government exists for a reason, and it is important that citizens understand the functions of each to be able to tell if the integrity of the system is being compromised. In principle a separation of powers should exist between the executive, judiciary and legislature in order to prevent abuses of powers and places checks on the power of each branch.

Public policy is designed and implemented by the...?
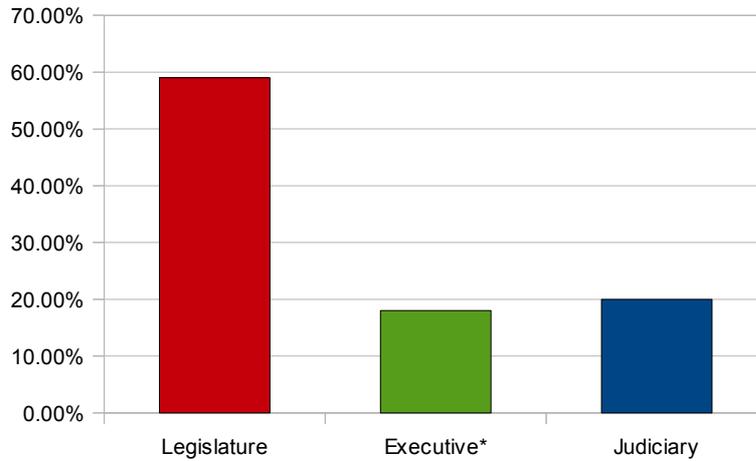
Figure 19:

Age

Table 27 shows there were three age groups that failed to register a correct response to this question: eighteen, twenty and twenty-four-year-olds. Half of all students aged twenty-two knew that the Executive was responsible for the design and implementation of public policy in South Africa. The results show that minorities within the other age groups represented knew the correct answer.

Age 19	Age 21	Age 22	Age 23
28.00%	14.00%	50.00%	33.00%

Table 27: Who designs and implements public policy? Results by Age

Gender

Table 28 shows that male students were better informed than female students, but by a slim margin. But since neither gender registered a response of greater than 50% this shows that both male and female students are more or less in the dark about who designs and implements public policy in South Africa.

Male	Female
20.00%	17.00%

Table 28: Who designs and implements public policy? Results by gender

Race

Table 29 shows that half of White students knew the correct answer to this question, compared to just sixteen percent of Indian students and thirteen percent of Black students.

Black	Indian	White
13.00%	16.00%	50.00%

Table 29: Who designs and implements public policy? Results by race group

Interest in Public Affairs

Table 30 shows that 89% of the students who supplied the correct answer to this question reported following public affairs in the media, and 56% of them admitted to discussing public affairs and political scandals with other people.

Follow Public Affairs in the Media	Discuss Public Affairs and Political Scandals
89.00%	56.00%

Table 30: Who designs and implements public policy? Comparison of results by interest in public affairs

Pressure Group Politics

In the second of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the Policy level I chose to focus on pressure group politics. I decided to this because of the power that pressure groups can have to change policies. I asked students to pick the name of the interest group that took the government to court in 200? over the provision of free medicines to patients with HIV/AIDS. I chose this question for two reasons. The first reason was that this question was related to the subject

of HIV/AIDS which is a major national issue. The second reason was that the example of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) was useful because it reflected the pressure that an interest group can bring to bear on the government. Figure 20 shows that a little less than half of the students questioned (47%) knew that the TAC had taken the government to court over the provision of anti-retroviral drugs to people with HIV/AIDS – and won. At the time that this happened it represented a landmark ruling that showed that the government could be made to change its position on policies provided that the forms were obeyed. It also resulted in the improvement of the quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Which group took the government to court over the provision of ARVs?
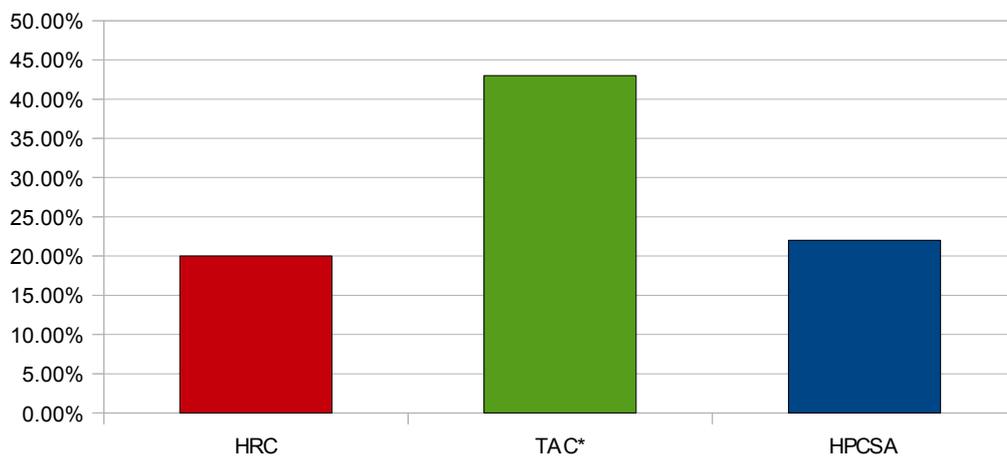
Figure 20:

Age

Figure 21 shows that the older students, those aged twenty-three and twenty-four, were better able to answer this question than their peers – with the exception of students aged twenty, eighty-eight percent of whom supplied the correct answer. This means that on the one hand, the expectation that older students would be better informed has been proven true. But on the other hand, twenty-year-olds, who represent the younger end of the spectrum, have outperformed twenty-three-year-olds.

Which group took the government to court over the provision of ARVs?
Results filtered by Age
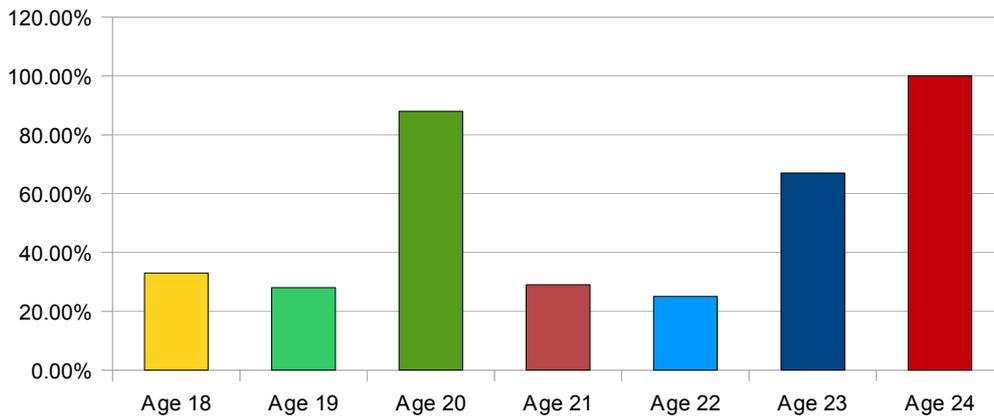
Figure 21:

Gender

This question is the rare exception thus far where female students as a group were better informed than their male peers. The lead, however, was a slim one. Figure 22 shows that forty-four percent of female students knew the correct answer to this question, compared to forty percent of males. This means that it is not impossible for women to be as well informed or even better informed than men about politics.

Which group took the government to court over the provision of ARVs?
Results filtered by Gender
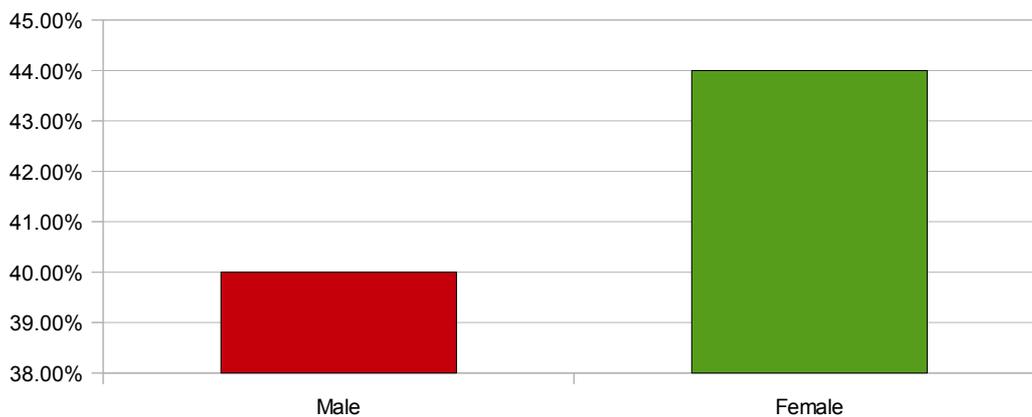
Figure 22:

Race

Table 31 shows that no one race group achieved a pass rate of fifty percent for this question. The group that came closest, at forty-seven percent, were Blacks.

Black	Indian	White
47.00%	44.00%	25.00%

Table 31: Which group took the government to court over the provision of ARVs? Results by race group.

Interest in Public Affairs

Table 32 shows that the students who knew about the TAC's victory in court were the same ones who followed public affairs in the media and discussed public affairs and political scandals with other people.

Follow Public Affairs in the Media	Discuss Public Affairs and Political Scandals
77.00%	72.00%

Table 32: Which group took the government to court over the provision of ARVs? Comparison of results by interest in public affairs

Foreign Policy

In the third of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of policy in South Africa, I chose to focus on foreign policy. I decided to do this because South Africa plays an important role in the region of southern Africa and Africa in general. The policies that the Executive branch pursues abroad will have implications for citizens at home and it is important that the electorate understands what is being done in their name on the international level. I asked students to name the southern African country to which South Africa had recently provided a R 2.4 Billion bail-out. I deliberately did not make this a multiple choice question because I did not want students to guess. By allowing

them to give their own answer in the space provided, I was able to gauge what students knew for a

fact, rather than rate their ability to make a good guess. Figure 23 shows that twenty-two percent of

students at Howard College knew that South Africa had recently provided a bail-out to Swaziland.
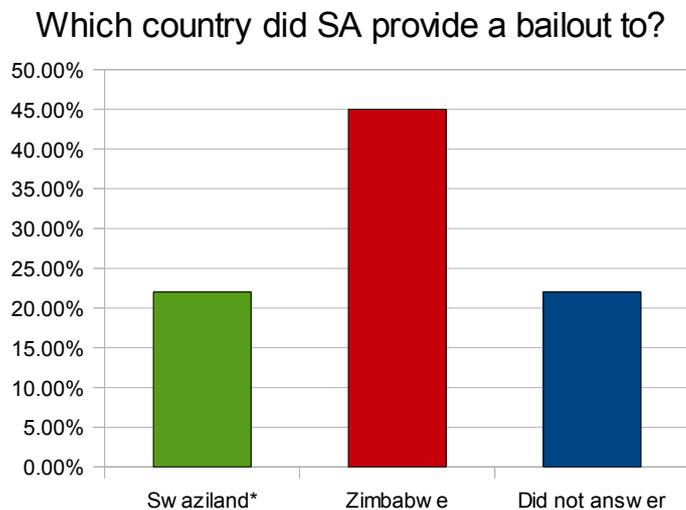
Figure 23:

The bail-out that South Africa provided Swaziland was intended to help the kingdom stave off

bankruptcy. The reason the country was in dire straits can be attributed to the mismanagement of

state revenue that allows the king to continue to support himself in the lavish lifestyle to which he

has grown accustomed. The bail-out that South Africa provided had the effect of propping up a

regime that should have fallen a long time ago. If Swaziland had gone bankrupt, it would have had a

devastating effect on the economy, but it might also have led to the fall of the monarchy and the rise

of democracy. But as a direct result of South African intervention, the regime stayed in place. One

good reason for South Africans to be aware of the bail-out was because the source of the funds was

tax money. A second reason was that it was done in their interests. Ostensibly, the actions of the

government abroad, and any kind of foreign intervention, should be in the national interest.

Age

Figure 24 shows that very small percentages of each of the represented age groups knew the correct

answer to this question. There was no age group that came close to achieving a pass rate of fifty

percent. However, all things being relative, students aged nineteen performed the worst and eighteen-year-olds did the best.

Which country did SA provide a bailout to?
Results filtered by Age
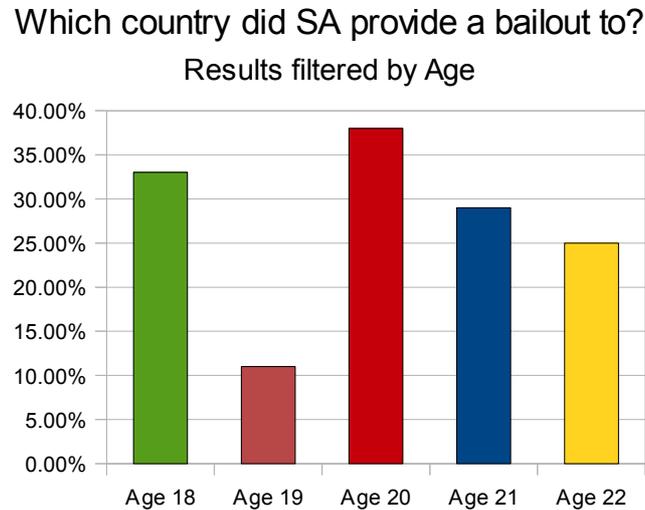
Figure 24:

Gender

Figure 25 shows that male students performed better than their female peers on this question. Almost half of all male students (47%) knew that South Africa had provided a bail-out to Swaziland, in comparison to just eleven percent of females. This is further evidence of the trend that males are more informed about politics than females.

Which country did SA provide a bailout to?
Results filtered by Gender
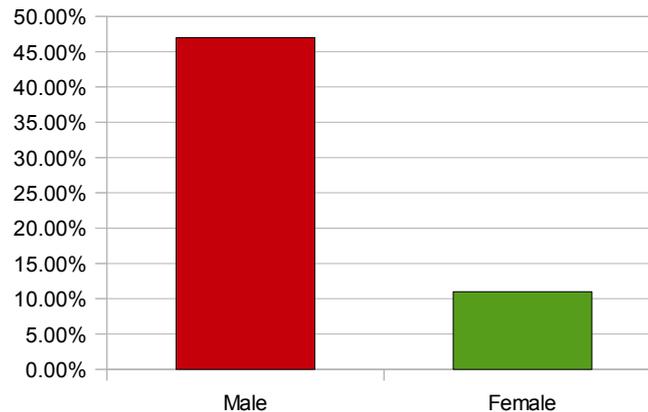
Figure 25:

Race

Table 33 shows that no one race group was truly better informed about the Swazi bail-out than the other. However, a greater percentage of Indian students knew the answer compared to Black students and no White students answered correctly. This shows that the ignorance seen here is cross cutting and not exclusive to a particular group.

Black	Indian	White
13.00%	28.00%	0.00%

Table 33: What country did SA provide a bailout to? Results by race group

Interest in Public Affairs

Table 34 confirms that the students who knew the correct answer to this question were the same ones who followed public affairs in the media and discussed public affairs and political scandals with other people.

Follow Public Affairs in the Media	Discuss Public Affairs and Political Scandals
82.00%	82.00%

Table 34: What country did SA provide a bailout to? Comparison of results by interest in public

affairs

Foreign Policy

In the last of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of policy in South Africa I chose to focus on foreign policy again, and in particular South Africa's membership of a regional association of nation states that would impact the kind of policies that are made at home. I asked students what the acronym "SADC" stood for and provided a box in which they could give their own answer. I did not want to influence their response by giving them alternatives to choose from as I expected that when in doubt, students would simply guess. An open-ended question was a better test of their knowledge on this subject because the responses given provided a more accurate reflection of what students knew. Figure 26 shows that a grand total of three students (6% of the sample) knew that SADC stood for Southern African Development Community.
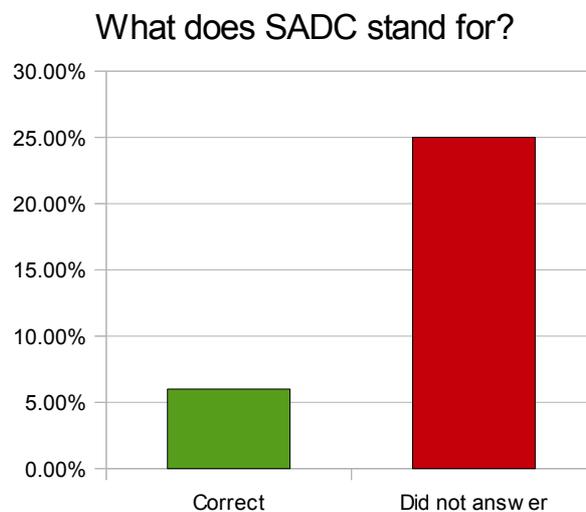
Figure 26:

The membership of South Africa in SADC is akin to the membership of the United States in NATO or NAFTA. The objectives of SADC and the agreements struck by its members have important implications for the lives of South Africans – and yet only six percent of the sample could correctly identify what the acronym stood for. And twenty-five percent (13 students) did not attempt the

question at all.

The fact that just three students knew the correct answer means that filtering the results for this question by age, gender and race will not yield much of significance. Nonetheless, I did, and Table 35 shows that more males than females knew the correct answer and that two out of the three students who got the answer right followed public affairs in the media and discussed public affairs and political scandals with other people.

Male	Female	Follow Public Affairs in the Media	Discuss Public Affairs and Political Scandals
7.00%	6.00%	67.00%	67.00%

Table 35: What does SADC count for? Results by gender and interest in public affairs

Conclusion

I used a set of four questions to test students' knowledge of the Process level of politics in South Africa. The outcome of the test was that students failed each question put to them. In the section that follows I will provide a brief summary of the results that were obtained.

In the first of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of public policy , I chose to focus on the branch of the government that was responsible for the implementation of public policy in South Africa. In a multiple choice question that listed the Judiciary, Executive and Legislature as possible options, I asked students to pick the one that was responsible for the design and implementation of public policy in South Africa. Just 18% of students knew that the Executive was the correct branch. This means that the sample failed this question.

In the second of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of the Policy level I chose to

focus on pressure group politics. I asked students to choose the name of the interest group that took the government to court (and won) over the provision of ARVs. I found that forty-three percent of students could name the correct group. This is less than the pass mark of fifty-percent and therefore the sample failed this question.

In the third of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of policy in South Africa, I chose to focus on foreign policy. I asked students to choose from a list of alternatives the name of the southern African country that South Africa had recently provided a bailout to. Just twenty-two percent of students could name the correct country. This means that the sample failed this question.

In the last of four questions designed to test students' knowledge of policy in South Africa I chose to focus on foreign policy again, and asked students if they knew what SADC referred to. SADC refers to the Southern African Development Community and is a regional association of nation states that South Africa is a member of. Just six percent of the sample knew what SADC was. This means that the sample failed this question.

Chapter 6: Attitudes and Feelings toward Politics

Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed the results of the political information test that comprised the first section of the questionnaire I used. In this chapter I will discuss the results from the second section. The second section of the questionnaire dealt with youth attitudes and feelings toward politics. I chose to divide the questionnaire like this to reflect the definition of political culture coined by Almond and Verba (1956) which stated that a political culture had two components: a knowledge of politics and attitudes and feelings toward politics. In order to reflect the separate but equal status of both components I chose to discuss them in their own chapters.

The structure of this chapter is influenced by the functionalist approach I took in adapting political culture as Almond and Verba (1956) conceived of it to suit the needs of the project I wanted to undertake. As stated in the chapter that dealt with the theoretical framework, there are three levels of political culture: a system level, a process level and a policy level (Almond and Powell: 1978). The discussion in this chapter will reflect that tripartite character. I will first discuss the set of questions that enable me to make observations about the system culture of youth, then move on to the process culture and finally conclude with a discussion of the policy culture.

System Culture

In the first of four questions designed to describe the System Culture of youth at Howard College, I chose to focus on the people in charge of national government. In Part A of the instrument the questions I asked dealt with the objective knowledge that students had. In Section B the questions I posed dealt with the same objects (for example, the people in charge of government) but investigated the attitudes and feelings that students had toward them. In Question 1 of Section B I asked students, "Do you think the Ministers in charge of national government do a good job?"

Students could choose Yes or No and were invited to explain the reason for their answer in the space provided.

Figure 27 shows that eighty-four percent of students questioned at Howard College did not think that the ministers in charge of government did a good job. This means that just twelve percent (6 students) were happy with how the government was being run in 2011/2012. This reflects a high level of dissatisfaction among the youth with how the people in charge of government were doing their job.

Do you think the Ministers in charge of government do a good job?
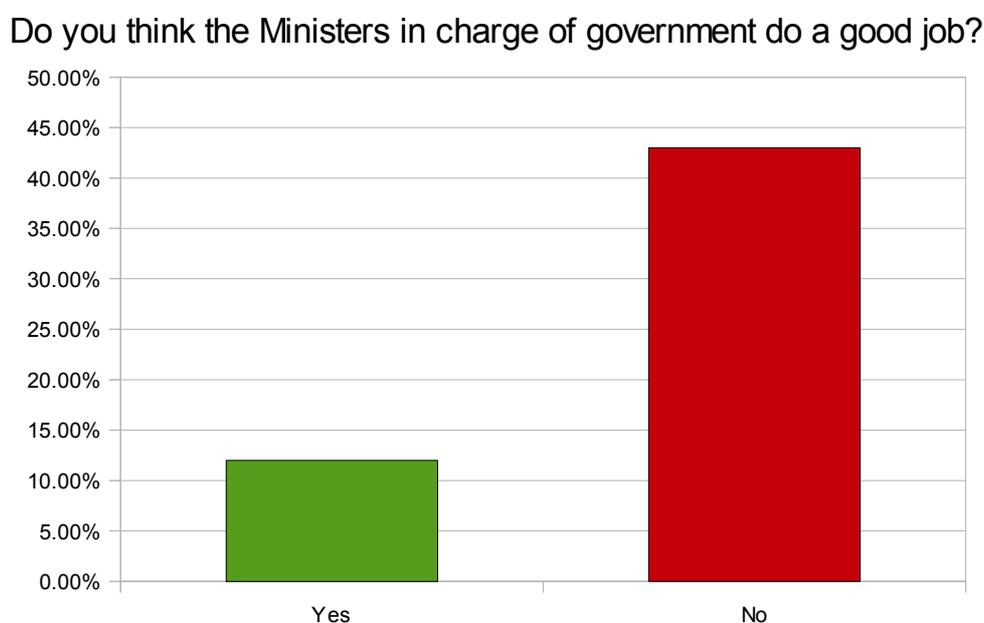
Figure 27:

Satisfied with Government

There were a total of six students who expressed satisfaction with the performance of the ministers in charge of government at the time. It would be useful to examine the reasons given that underlie this positive sentiment to provide a comparison with the negative responses that were given.

Table 36 shows the positive reviews that were received about the performance of national ministers. All responses were recorded verbatim.

Participant ID	Response
1	"They know their line of work and know they are accountable when things go wrong in their ministry department."
36	"Depends on which minister. Some are great. Some not so much."
41	"You can see improvement. Especially in the housing department, many people are given houses as well as the supply of clean water and roads and many other improvements in the country."
44	"They deliver the basic needs to citizens and they make sure that people get the equal opportunities for citizens."
45	"Because we can see the outcomes in many things such Development even though there are still undeveloped places."
46	"Yes because from what was left by x [sic] president is still going on very well and he is fixing the wrongs that was done by x [sic] president. But he is a human being he got his wrongs somewhere but lately he is good."

Table 36: Perceptions on the performance of ministers in charge of national government

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Participant 41 cited specific improvements such as people being given houses and the provision of water as reasons for their approval of the ministers in charge. In South Africa, housing and service delivery are two very important issues because a lot of people still dwell in informal settlements and do not have water piped into their homes. Therefore it is not surprising that progress on these fronts would be cited as reasons to approve of how the ministers in charge have been doing their jobs, but for the fact that there are more people who would cite a *lack* of the very same things – of both houses and access to safe water – as reasons to be dissatisfied with the performance of ministers and government.

In terms of housing, despite the nearly three million homes that government has provided, fromer Finance Minister Trevor Manuel stated "South Africa still has almost the same number of people living in informal settlements as it did in 1994" News24 (2014). This means that while there has been progress and some people have been liberated from homelessness, the progress made has not been enough for more participants in this study to cite the delivery of homes as a reason to be pleased with the government. But nothing the government does to solve the problem of the homeless will (ever) be enough for two reasons – which citizens either do not grasp, or refuse to accept in their anger and desperation. The first reason is that there are structural constraints on the state's ability to meet the demand of houses "for all". These include, but are not limited to, the budget and the land available to allocate to these projects. The second reason is that the number of people in need are (like the population itself) ever increasing. Murray (2014) noted that:

> An estimated 1.6-million households live in informal settlements in South Africa, and while the African National Congress (ANC) government has tried to tackle the problem with the promise of free housing for all who cannot afford it, the number of people on the so-called RDP waiting list has only grown, soaring past 2.3-million by the last census.

The task of providing free housing in South Africa for all those who cannot afford it is like trying to scoop water out of the bottom of a sinking boat with a cup that has holes in it. It is beyond the state's capacity to build enough new houses for all those that need them – at least all at once. It is for this reason that informal settlements will continue to grow for the foreseeable future, and with them the dissatisfaction and anger that citizens feel at what appear to be broken promises.

The government's success in improving citizens' access to water has been mixed. Like with housing there has been progress and improvement, but what has been achieved is still not enough to meet the needs of everyone. This is a complicated issue because while it is possible to condemn the government on the one hand, there are citizens like Participant 41 who praise them on the other for improvements seen first-hand.

A report by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) showed that national statistics relating to access to water are misleading because these obscure the real conditions in different provinces. For example, it sounds impressive that "eighty-five percent (85%) of households [in South Africa] have access to RDP acceptable levels of water" but what exactly does "RDP acceptable levels" mean? There are three levels of acceptable: piped water within dwelling, piped water within stand and piped water within two hundred meters from stand. SAHRC (2014: 38) cited the 2011 Statistics South Africa Census to show that in Kwazulu-Natal, forty percent of households had piped water within dwelling, twenty-three percent had piped water within stand and fourteen percent had piped water within two hundred meters from stand. The SAHRC (2014: 38) also noted that fourteen percent of households in Kwazulu-Natal alone did not have (and never had) access to piped water. This province is comparative in size to Portugal and has a population of 10 645 400 KZNONLINE (2014).

It is a given that having piped water within two hundred meters is better than having no access at all, but what the preceding discussion is meant to show is that while the situation on the ground has improved, it is still far from ideal, and for this reason more participants did not praise the government about access to water. The service delivery protests over water shortages are proof of this. The issue of access to water is complicated because on the one hand (as with housing) there are limits on what the state can deliver at one time – but on the other hand reports of corruption and maladministration SAHRC (2014: 8) show that more could be done if left to capable hands.

The positive sentiment expressed toward national government in this question through students' perceptions of the performance of the ministers in charge, is useful in helping to determine what the future electorate uses to benchmark performance. I found that three out of the six students who thought that the ministers in charge did a good job gave reasons for their answer that related to real examples of development. Participant 41 cited improvements in general with a particular focus on housing, supply of water and roads. Participant 44 referred to the delivery of services in general and Participant 45 cited outcomes in terms of development that could be seen first-hand, while conceding that under-development in some places was still manifest.

Interest in Public Affairs

I found that all the students who agreed that the ministers in charge of government were doing a good job both followed public affairs in the media and discussed public affairs and political scandals with other people.

Dissatisfied with Government

I found that the majority of students questioned at Howard College (84%) did not believe that the ministers in charge of government were doing a good job.

Such an overwhelming response in the negative points to a deep-seated dissatisfaction with the authorities in charge of national government and has important implications for politics and political participation in South Africa in both the present and the future. My discussion of these results will be divided into two parts. In the first part I will discuss the reasons that were supplied to explain why students did not think that the ministers in charge of government were doing a good job. And in the second part I will discuss the implications of this for both politics and the political culture of South Africa.

The main reasons that students gave for being dissatisfied with the performance of the ministers in charge of government were corruption and poor service delivery. In a normative sense, a public servant (with emphasis on the *servant)* should be someone who seeks office out of a sincere desire to uplift and do good. The people in charge of government should be motivated by a higher calling – but in practice the world over (and in South Africa in particular) it has often been the case that public office has been magnetic to the self-serving rather than those motivated to serve in the public interest. The effect of this has been the construction of the popular stereotype of politicians as sleazy and corrupt, with their hands either caught in the proverbial cookie jar or held palm out for their ten percent.

This appears to be the same dominant image held by the sample of students that I studied. The youth at Howard College do not regard the ministers in charge of government as either good at their jobs or as individuals trying to make the country a better place for all. Rather the perception of the people in charge of government is, as Participant 31 would put it, "They are involved in corruption and mismanagement,". This means that corruption, or the perception of it, whether real or imagined, is part of the fabric of the System Culture. The youth believe that the authorities in charge of government are corrupt, and this belief is not unfounded – which is not to say that *everyone* in

public office is corrupt. But there have been high-profile cases of corruption that have garnered media attention which I am sure have in no small part influenced the youth's perception of the people in charge of government as corrupt.

The most notable case of corruption in South African political history (before Nkandla Gate) was the 1999 Arms Deal, in which the staggering figure of R46.6 billion was spent to equip the nation's defence force. There were widespread allegations of corruption in the process which were the subject of the Seriti Commission of Inquiry, appointed in September 2011. In one proven case, the former Chief Whip of the ANC, Tony Yengeni, was convicted in 2003 for "defrauding Parliament by failing to disclose a 47 percent discount on a 4X4 Mercedes-Benz" Times Live (2013) that was part of a bribe that "was arranged by a representative of a bidder in the government's arms acquisition process. Yengeni was then chairperson of Parliament's joint standing committee on defence, which oversaw the arms deal" Mail and Guardian (2005). Former President Thabo Mbeki, MPs, ministers and their advisers as well as current President Jacob Zuma have all been implicated in allegations of corruption relating to the Arms Deal, but have yet to be found guilty by a Commission of Inquiry or a court of law.

Corruption in government was not the focus of this research, but incidents that citizens would have heard about are relevant because these would be responsible for creating or reinforcing their perceptions about the conduct of the people in charge. For example, Jacob Zuma was dismissed as deputy president of South Africa in 2005 because of allegations of corruption. But he was never tried in court over these allegations despite evidence being heard in the Durban High Court that proved a corrupt relationship between him and his financial advisor Schabir Shaik. The Mail and Guardian (2005) reported that: "In his summary, Judge Squires said payments made to Zuma by Shaik constituted a benefit under the definition of corruption" but corruption charges against Zuma

were withdrawn in 2009 in a move that drew widespread criticism. And the fact remains that evidence was presented that never became the subject of a trial. Then there was Nkandla Gate when it was revealed that over R200 million of public funds had been spent to upgrade the President's private residence. Given cases like these (and there are more) it is not surprising that the youth appear to have lost faith in the national executive. Participant 23 stated that, "A lot of the ministers are involved in corruption," and this perception can certainly be backed up by reports in the media – whether these are the result of alleged political smear campaigns or the truth. An Afrobarometer survey conducted in the last quarter of 2011 cited by Khumalo (2012) showed that the youth are not alone in their perceptions of corruption:

> Public officials such as councillors and members of Parliament have the scathing disapproval of many citizens who believe that they are involved in one or another form of corruption.

This confirms that there has been an erosion of the trust placed by the public in their elected representatives, who appear to them to be more self-serving than devoted public servants. It bears repeating therefore that corruption, or the perception of it, whether real or imagined, is an ingrained part of the fabric of the System Culture in South Africa. Africa cited in Khumalo (2012) stated:

> There was a sharp increase in the proportion of respondents who believe that members of Parliament are involved in corruption. In 2008, 25 percent felt that "almost all" or "most" members of Parliament were involved in corruption, compared with 40 percent in 2011.

This perception of rampant corruption has implications for future youth political participation, because if the consequence of the 'man on the street's' vote is to put in charge a corrupt official who

will pilfer and abuse state resources at the expense of the electorate, then what is the point of voting? I will expand on this point in the next part of the discussion, after I have expanded more on the issue of service delivery and why a lack thereof has led to such dissatisfaction with the powers that be.

A Municipal IQ report cited by News24 (2014) on April 3 stated that, "There have been 48 major service delivery protests against local government since 1 January 2014". *There is no smoke without fire* runs the old adage, and applied to this context it can be taken to mean that there would be no protests if there was nothing to protest about. Participant 48 replied, "Poor service delivery. Lots of empty promises," to explain their reason for disagreeing that the ministers in charge of government did a good job. At the beginning of my discussion of the results for this question, I examined two issues that related to service delivery: water and housing. I showed that while there had been enough progress made for some citizens to report satisfaction with the performance of the government, there was still a significant number in the country that had yet to be uplifted. I established then that these were twin issues that could equally be used to cite dissatisfaction with the government and I will refer to that proof here to show that service delivery in South Africa has failed to keep pace with the needs of the urban poor. And that explains why it has been cited as a reason by the youth to be dissatisfied with the performance of the people in charge of government. If more is not done deliver basic services to citizens then these protests will not end, and if anything, will increase, entrenching protest as a part of the political culture. This also means there will be increased potential for violent confrontations between protesters and police.

In this part of the discussion I will focus on the implications for politics and the political culture in South Africa of the results that I obtained. The dominant theme of the results for this question was that the youth were not satisfied with the job that the ministers in charge of government were doing.

There was a small segment of those questioned (12%) who were more positive, but in the main the result was that students at Howard College were not well disposed toward the political authorities. The implications of this are the following:

- The erosion of trust in public officials and disenchantment with the political process
- Anger at corruption and dissatisfaction with service delivery can lead to increased public protests

I will first explore the idea of erosion of trust in public officials and then link this with disenchantment with the political process. Trust is capital, and when people and institutions lose trust (and faith) they experience corresponding losses that can cost them dearly. Trust is capital. By this I mean that it is important. Trust is or should be the foundation of any good relationship, be it between man and wife or citizen and state. The idea of trust as capital dovetails with the literature on social capital, in which different thinkers at different times have used the concept to talk about how society functions. Indeed, the concept of social capital like that of political culture is difficult to define and has more than meaning depending on the theorist and school of thought to which you are referring. Coleman (1994) cited in Fine and Lapavitsas (2004) spoke about social capital in terms of capital, as something that constituted a benefit or an advantage that could lead to a better outcome for a person or a group. This is the meaning that I found the most useful because trust as a form of social capital can be used to purchase electoral victories poll after poll if it can be retained. Trust reproduced over generations, trust in political parties or particular leaders, is not just a form of social capital but political capital. The ANC banks on the trust it has gained as a liberation movement in the past to secure electoral victories in the present and the future. Haynes (2009) noted that one criticism of the concept of social capital is that the word 'capital' is misleading and it is not really a form of capital. I would contend that in the context of trust as a form of social capital, that

the word 'currency' is a better fit. This is because in the context of political culture, trust in institutions is part of attitudes and feelings toward politics. But it is not just trust in institutions, but trust in the political system itself as it is embodied in the people who run it. In this sense, trust becomes a kind of currency. The relative value of a currency is susceptible to fluctuation based on market conditions – this case on the attitudes and feelings of citizens toward the regime. The idea of trust as a form of social capital and political currency helps to explain the relative dominance of different political actors.

A flaw in the design of a vehicle brake system that leads to a loss of life that the auto maker knew about and could have prevented, will lead to consumers losing faith and trust in the brand. In a similar way, voters can lose confidence in both officials and the political parties that they represent when these people and organisations become tainted by allegations of fraud and corruption. It becomes worse still when those allegations are proven true. But in the case of the auto maker there will be some accountability at least because people are able to sue for damages as a form of redress – but when citizens are hurt by the actions of corrupt officials in the government, it is not so simple. Citizens can torch a councillor's car and picket outside municipal buildings as a form of protest but when it comes to holding the system itself accountable, it is like flogging a dead horse. For example, eNCA (2014) reported in June 2014 on the case of teachers in Eshowe, Kwazulu-Natal who were going to work despite not being paid since the beginning of the year. This shows a clear lack of accountability because despite these teachers' communicating with the department over not being paid, nothing happened to address the matter. It was plain that the department was at fault but no one could be held accountable for the situation. The blame was placed on an administrative issue eNCA (2014) but is symptomatic of a system in general that cannot be brought to account by the people it is meant to serve.

If citizens do not trust the authorities in charge this can manifest in a number of ways. To begin

with, no one will support a person or system they do not trust. Trust is a pre-requisite for support and the foundation for a good relationship, be it between friends or between citizen and state. If the cause for the loss of trust is based on reports of fraud, corruption and maladministration then it is not just distrust that citizens will feel, but anger too. Anger leads to hate. And hate mixed with a loss of trust can lead (at the extreme) to a sense of alienation. It is a terrible thing to find that your heroes have feet of clay and that is the result of hearing about how politicians have profited from their position. The people who promised to give you a better life if you voted for them turn out to be silver tongued thieves. At the extreme, these feelings of alienation could feed a subversive movement where citizens begin to think about overthrowing a regime that no longer represents their interests. This represents the extreme end of the response scale but it is not without precedent. The anti-Apartheid movement was itself a reaction against a regime that repressed and ignored Blacks. The feelings of being short changed, and watching while others prosper while you remain mired in poverty, if experience by enough citizens at the same time, will be like a rag of kerosene that just needs a match. But this is an extreme case and things would have to worsen a great deal for citizens to feel like the regime had to be replaced by non-democratic means. However this depends on just how much trust citizens have lost in the system and the people who run it.

If citizens lose faith in the political system itself as a result of prolonged poor and corrupt performance by the people in charge, then this can lead to a decline in voter turnout as citizens express their dissatisfaction through absenting themselves at the polls. A decline in voter turnout can have negative consequences. For example, in the presidential elections held in Egypt in 2014, "fewer than 50 per cent of Egyptians turned out to vote" ABC (2014) and this led to criticism that undermined the legitimacy of the election. This shows that when citizens fail to turn up at the polls in significant numbers this will undermine the mandate of the government elected. In the case of South Africa the current levels of voter apathy and apathy among the youth in particular would have

to increase for this to present a problem to governance: but it is not impossible given what is happening to put citizens off from voting (reports of corruption, poor service delivery and so on).

Another way to interpret what will happen when citizens (and the youth in particular who represent the future electorate) lost trust in public officials and the political system mean to serve them, is to apply the concepts of exit and voice as used by Hirschman (1978). He stated that:

> There are two main types of activist reactions to discontent with organizations to which one belongs or with which one does business: either to voice one's complaints, while continuing as a member or customer, in the hope of improving matters; or to exit from the organization, to take one's business elsewhere Hirschman (1978: 90).

This means that when citizens lose trust in public officials and the political system as a consequence of reports of corruption and poor service delivery, they will make one of two choices. The first is to voice their dissatisfaction with the system and the people in charge. On one level this can be the mundane use of their voice to complain – on another the use of their voice can translate into more vocal action such joining in a protest. My reading Hirschman (1978) is that the outcome of using their voice in this context is to bring about change. The other choice that citizens can make is to exit. The political equivalent of "to take one's business elsewhere" Hirschman (1978: 90) in this context would be switch one's allegiance to a different political party – one that promises change. A second possible interpretation of the option of exit would be for citizens to cease their support for the party in charge, and stop participating in the system altogether – by not voting at all. A third interpretation of this option would be a literal exit: emigration and leaving the country for promise of greener pastures. But this is an option closed to all but an elite few who have the resources to do so.

The range of responses which citizens will adopt in the face of declining trust in the political system and in the people who run it include anger and hate, mounting alienation and a desire to replace the system with one that works, abstention from voting, vocalising their dissatisfaction with the goal of improving matters or exit, ceasing to support and participate in the system. The exact response that happens could in fact be one of these or a combination of them. Citizens could start off using their voice to make a difference, find that it has no effect, become angered and decide to stop trying because nothing they do has any effect – then give themselves the proverbial kick and switch their allegiance at the polls or (at the extreme) join a new movement to replace the system with one that works.

It is possible that if the present dissatisfaction with the political authorities continues to increase, then the youth will continue to abstain from elections and real voter turn-out at the polls will fall. Since it is the Black vote in particular that decides the election result in South Africa, and the Black vote is in the main aligned with the ANC, I would venture that the support of the ANC will stagnate and begin to fall as a consequence. In the absence of the large majorities it has won in the past, the ANC could be forced to enter into a coalition to form a government.

I mentioned earlier the perception among Black voters that it is disloyal to vote for a party other than the ANC because of its role in the struggle for liberation. Given this, even if people are dissatisfied with the ANC, they would rather not vote at all, than vote for an opposition party. This will contribute to the decline in voter turn-out that I predicted. But the loyalty that the youth feel toward the ANC as a liberation movement is open to debate when they are faced with the current crises of high unemployment and inflation. The older generation who still remember what life was like under Apartheid would, I believe, have a stronger sense of loyalty to the ANC than the current

generation that is coming of age. And this will leave their support open to be co-opted by other parties, most notably the newest arrival on the political scene, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).

The electorate have already begun to lose trust, and if nothing is done about this then it is bound to continue. It is not clear what the ANC will do when that point is reached, nor what the effects will be of their actions now to appease voters. For example, the suspension by the ANC of the Madibeng Municipality Mayor, municipal ANC Chief Whip and Speaker in the wake of protests there where four people were killed during protests over water shortages Mail and Guardian (2014). The people suspended subsequently resigned, and the purpose of their suspensions was meant to show some kind of accountability not just in the wake of the death of four protesters, but also to address the reports of corruption in the municipality. However it is not clear whether or not replacing the people in charge when allegations of corruption arise will appease angry citizens enough to retain their trust and support.

To summarize then, the potential outcomes as result of the findings for this question are that:

- Citizens will begin to lose trust in public officials if nothing is done to stem corruption and maladministration

- The trust that citizens lose in the people in charge of the system will slowly transfer to the political system itself

- As a consequence of declining trust in public officials and the political system, more citizens will either abstain from elections or in the case of the youth, (who are more plastic with regard to their preferences) switch their allegiance to a new party, other than the ANC, that claims to better represent their interests

- If citizens lose a sufficient amount of faith in the political system itself this will lead to

feelings of alienation and could contribute to an anti-government movement

I believe that three current trends provide support for these predictions. The first is the high level of voter apathy among the youth, the second is the declining support for the ANC. The third trend is bound up in the high level of youth unemployment in South Africa which contributes to feelings of dissatisfaction among this group.

In a survey of youth conducted prior to the national elections in 2014, it was found that almost a third of young people aged between 18 and 34 did not plan to vote Wakefield cited in (News24: 2014). This shows that young people are already not interested in voting, and it stands to reason that if the things that anger them like fraud and corruption increase, the youth who do vote might begin to be put off and either abstain or switch their allegiance. This means that the decline in voter turn out which I predicted as an outcome earlier has in fact already begun.

The second trend I spoke of was the declining support for the ANC. Mataboge and Letsoalo (2014) reported after the 2014 elections that the ruling party "has seen a decline in support in the past two elections" and that "At 62%, support for the ANC has subsided to where it was in 1994 after an increase to 66% and 68% under former president Thabo Mbeki". This supports what I said about the ANC's support base eroding if it failed to appease voters by doing something about (among other things) fraud and corruption. In the 2014 elections "seven million voters chose to stay away" Mataboge and Letsoalo (2014) and this supports the notion of declining voter turn-out in the face of dissatisfaction with government. The threshold where people will vote for a party other than the ANC rather than abstain from voting altogether has not been reached yet for the majority of its supporters, but it could reach that point over time if nothing is done to bring these voters back into the fold. There have been two significant occasions where members of the ANC have broken with

the party and joined opposition groups. The first was with the formation of the United Democratic Movement (UDM) and the second occasion was when prominent members of the ANC left to from the Congress of the People (COPE). These two occasions show that even people within the party are not so devoted to the party that they will not leave to pursue democratic alternatives, and that rank and file supporters can and will leave with them.

The third and final trend of which I spoke related to youth unemployment. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Risk 2014 report cited by Fin24 "more than 50% of young South Africans between 15 and 24 are unemployed". Not being able to find paid work and earn a living can lead to feelings of frustration and desperation and this is a situation that a lot of young people in South find themselves in. To hear about politicians who are getting rich from tender deals and stealing from state coffers would stoke their rage and add anger and resentment to the mix. Participant 24 said, "Because we are still facing many problems in SA such as unemployment, crime HIV/AIDS and poverty whereas they are rich and drive one of the top cars in SA". This statement indicates something of the resentment felt by the youth. That while they have to suffer being poor and unemployed, government ministers reap the benefits of their position such as wealth and getting to drive a top car. This shows that the youth that there is a level of unhappiness not just with the political authorities and their maladministration, but with the status quo in general.

I would contend that youth unemployment will feed the feelings of dissatisfaction that this group feels toward government and will contribute to their disenchantment with the regime. As previously stated, South Africa has a high rate of youth unemployment and coupled with this is a lack of entrepreneurship among citizens aged eighteen to thirty-four. Engelbrecht cited in Fin24 (2012) stated that "[the] 2011 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) SA report found that only a small number of young South Africans were entrepreneurs". This is problematic because if more youth

were entrepreneurs this would alleviate the problem of youth unemployment. Fin24 (2012) noted that "6.8% of South Africans between the ages of 18 and 24 were entrepreneurs and 10.2% between 25 and 34". There could be a number of reasons for this, but what it means in the context of this discussion is that more youth depend on the state for assistance than are willing (or able) to start their businesses. And when the state does not (in their minds) provide enough this leads to more dissatisfaction with the powers that be.

I took the position that the alienation the youth could come to feel toward the political system and people in charge could leave them open to being co-opted by other political parties. But this presupposes that the youth will still want to participate in the system. But there are other outlets for the feelings that the youth have in relation to their social and economic situation. These outlets include turning to crime and drug use. There are a range of social issues facing the youth that will affect how they respond to disappointment at being let down by the system.

In the second question I designed to describe the System Culture of youth at Howard College, I chose to focus on the nation and what Almond and Powell (1978: 33) referred to as "the problem of national identity". The so-called "problem" as they put it is whether or not citizens feel a sense of loyalty to the state, and to find out whether young South Africans do or do not I asked them, "Are you proud to be called a South African?" Students could select either Yes or No in response and were then asked to explain the reason for their answer in the space provided.
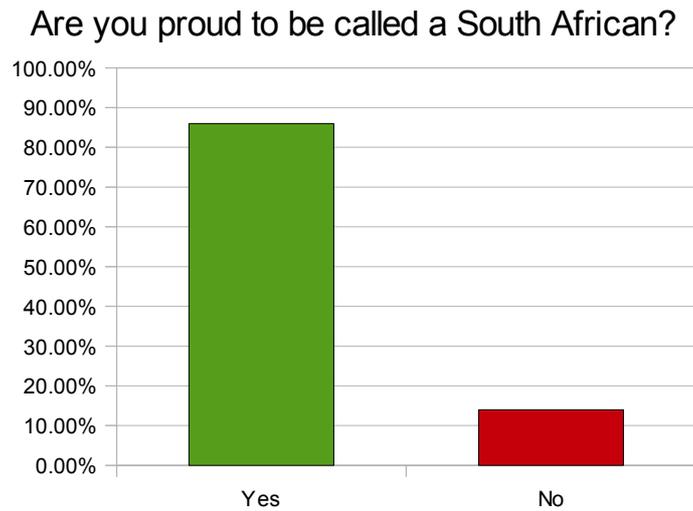
Figure 28:

Figure 28 shows that eighty-six percent of youth at Howard College felt proud to be called a South African. The results reflected high overall percentage, but it was interesting to note that this sentiment was not unanimous. Fourteen percent of youth (7 students) were not proud of being South African.

Not Proud

I wanted to find out why South African youth were not proud of being called South African. Table 38 shows the complete reasons that were given.

Participant ID	Reason
10	"Too much crime, scandles [sic] from the gov. poverty, no jobs etc Honestly puts a bad image on us."

11	"Our living conditions differ from First world countries"
17	"We live in a very beautiful country, but hardly anyone notices this."
21	"I don't think we have achieved any progress, rather alot [sic] of regress"
23	"Our president and other members of government are an embarressment [sic] and bring the name of our country down."
34	"Because inflation continues to rise, petrol is expensive, people still dont [sic] have basic resources, rape stats have increased (which excludes reported cases)"
50	"I'm subjected to being one"

Table 38: Reasons for not being proud to be called a South African

The reasons given for not being proud to be a South African were not attributed to race or Apartheid, and narrow group identities such as being Zulu or Indian did not feature as part of the mix. Instead, students at Howard College cited reasons such as crime, political scandals and pressing social problems such as inflation, access to basic resources and the scourge of rape. Being called a South African means different things to different people and in this case some young South

Africans resented the label because of all the things they perceived were wrong with the country and did not want to be associated with themselves.

The responses obtained were significant for two reasons. The first reason is to do with the number of responses and the second reason relates to their content .

It was significant that so few young South Africans reported not being proud to be South African. These responses accounted for fourteen percent of the total sample, and show that this kind of sentiment is limited to only a few. This is a positive sign because it means that the idea of being South African, the very notion of a common nationality, is not contested. The essence of what it means to be South African can be open to debate and mean different things to different people, but first everyone needs to accept that it is possible to be both Black and Zulu and South African at the same time. The responses to this question could have gone a different way, with youth laying claim to labels drawn from culture, language and ethnicity to define themselves in opposition to being called South African. Not one out of the 51 students stated, "I am proud to be a [Zulu, Indian, Afrikaner]. That is who I am". A part of Apartheid was the construction of differences to keep people separate and I find it heartening to note that not even the negative responses echo that kind of propaganda.

Proud to be South African

It was positive to note that the overwhelming majority of students at Howard College were proud to be called South African.

Among the reasons that South African youth gave to be proud of their nation were the natural beauty of the country, its cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity, and overcoming Apartheid to

become a democracy. These were the objects of greatest pride for South African youth, and provide an indication of what can unite them in the face of national strife. It is important to note however that this was a sample of youth at a university and does not represent the poor and unemployed or rural youth. The youth I studied are relatively better off and therefore have a reason to be more positive in their assessment.

However, I would still contend that the positive sentiment contained in these responses is significant for the following reason. It shows that the youth have not lost faith or confidence in the system as a whole, even if eighty-four percent of them did not think that the ministers in charge of government were doing a good job. It is interesting to note that eighty-four percent of youth had something negative to say about the ministers in charge, but eighty-six percent are firm in their pride of being South African and have slightly more positive things to say about the country in general. These are the same students who were complaining about fraud, corruption and service delivery earlier – but that same sentiment has not tainted how they feel about South Africa as a whole. This means that the youth have not lost confidence or faith in the political system – yet.

The feelings of South African youth toward the authorities in charge was negative. Their feelings about being South African were positive, despite the bad things they had to say regarding corruption. As Participant 27 put it, "As much as there is a lot of crime, there are so many things to be proud of..people, food, cultures etc". The purpose of asking students if they were proud to be South African was to determine how closely they identified with the nation, and what their feelings were toward the system as a whole. I found that South African youth were united by a pride in their diversity. The very thing that could cause conflict between them, their different languages, culture and so on, was in fact a source of national pride.

In the third question designed to describe the System Culture of South Africa I chose to investigate the kind of treatment that the youth would expect to receive in a government office. This was motivated by the assumption that the feelings that people have toward government authorities may be inferred from their expectations of how they will be treated by them Almond and Verba (1956: 68). It follows that when citizens expect that they will not be given fair and considerate treatment by government authorities this indicates something important about their perception of how the system works. It indicates that citizens are wary and do not have a high level of trust in the system.

I asked students, "Suppose there was some question you had to take to a government office – for example a tax or housing regulation. Do you think that you would be given equal treatment? Would you be treated as well as anyone else?" This was a multiple part question and in the first part students could choose Yes or No. Figure 29 shows that eighty percent of the students questioned at Howard College replied in the negative. This means that the majority of youth did not believe that they would be given equal treatment at a government office.
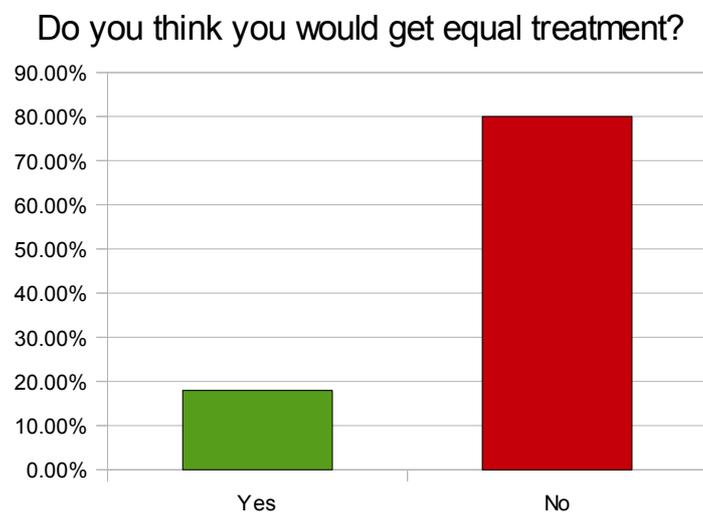
Figure 29:

It would be worthwhile to recapitulate the results of this section thus far to put them into perspective. Eighty-four percent of youth at Howard College did not think that the ministers in

charge of government were doing a good job, for reasons relating to fraud and corruption. In spite of this, eighty-six percent of youth were still proud to be called South African and cited a shared linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity to explain their response. In this question, exactly eighty percent of the same students that were questioned, did not expect to be treated equally at a government office. In spite of revelling in their diversity as a point of national pride, the youth still slammed the performance of the political authorities and indicated in no uncertain terms that while we are all equal before the law, to quote Orwell, some are more equal than others – especially when placed in the situation put to them in the question. This means that young South Africans are a direct bunch who do not sugar-coat the harsh realities of life, on the one hand calling themselves the rainbow nation and on the other conceding that not everyone is treated equally. The implication of this is that there exists a tension of sorts, where not everything is good but some things are better than others – and this in general influences their perception of the political system. The tension that this can produce is interesting and can twist the fabric of not just the System Culture, but the political culture in general, because of the inequalities (and corresponding resentment) that it is capable of producing.

This was a multiple part question, and in the next part I asked students to explain the reason for their answer. To begin, I will address the sub-group in the sample that did expect to be treated as well as anyone else. Table 39 shows the full responses that were given.

Participant ID	Response
12	"I believe they don't discriminate"
16	"Everyone is allowed to express their view"
28	"Im [sic] not black but the Constitution includes the right to equality"

29	"The Constitution protects us all as equal citizens."
33	"I expect to be treated just like any other, whether I will is yet to be seen"
35	"But depending on race and gender and how the other person feels toward those things - how they react to it."
36	"I believe that I would be treated in a manner indicative of the competence of the official and the politeness of my request, nothing else"
37	"Equal treatment I guess like everyone else. Well past experience they are not very helpful especially home affairs and if they don't know an answer they won't help."
42	"I am also a SA citizen with rights just like any other citizen."

Table 39: Do you think you would be treated as well as anyone else? Yes.

The main reason that eighteen percent of youth at Howard College (or just 9 out of 51 students) said they would expect equal treatment was because it is their legal right guaranteed by the Constitution. Participant 33, a nineteen-year-old Indian female, replied, "I expect to be treated just like any other, whether I will is yet to be seen". This response illustrates the expectation of equal treatment, but she is realistic about her chances. It is not a foregone conclusion for her. It was significant and interesting that more youth did not respond like Participant 36, "I believe that I would be treated in a manner indicative of the competence of the official and the politeness of my request, nothing else". In this response the participant bases the expectation of their treatment on the ability of the official assisting them. The other youth who responded in the affirmative based their answers on

notions of equal rights, but for Participant 36 that didn't enter into their assessment at all: it was a case of the competence of the official - "nothing else". That more youth did not take this position, and eighty percent of them replied in the negative to this question, indicates that there is a perception among them that there is a factor beyond the competence of the official which will influence their treatment by government officials.

Participant 28 raised an interesting point, "Im [sic] not black but the Constitution includes the right to equality". This student was a twenty-one-year-old Indian male and the use of the words "Im [sic] not black" to qualify their response indicates the assumption that to get good treatment at a government office one has to be black. But there was just one Black student in this (small) sub-group that expected equal treatment. If Black citizens were guaranteed better treatment by virtue of their skin colour then it is reasonable to expect that more Black youth would have answered in the affirmative to this question – but in fact the opposite has happened. Table 40 shows the composition of this sub-group by gender and race. This sub-group was dominated by Indian students, who are among the very people you would expect to complain about *not* being treated equally. Obviously, there were more Indian students who answered in the negative, but it is still significant that there were some of them who expected equal treatment.

Next I will discuss the responses given by youth who did not expect to be treated as well as anyone else.

The purpose of asking this question was to determine the attitude and feelings that South African youth have toward the authorities in charge of government. This can include both political appointees and civil servants. I chose to focus on the officials that ordinary citizens would encounter at a government office and used the example of having to go there with a tax or a housing

question. This was the same question that Almond and Verba (1956) used in *The Civic Culture* and I found it to be just as effective in the current study. Asking students to consider taking a tax or a housing question to a government office put them in mind of a real world situation and forced them to consider the kind of experience they would have. I expected that their responses would be based on either past experience in a similar situation or what they imagined they would happen based on their evaluation of how the government operates.

I found based on the results that South African youth have a negative idea of the kind of treatment that they can expect to receive at the hands of government officials. This negative orientation was cross cutting because students from all race groups that were represented shared this opinion. There was a minority from each race group that expected equal treatment, but when it comes to a discussion of the eighty percent of the sample who answered in the negative to this question, it is clear that the bulk of students whatever their age, gender or race share the same expectation. And this becomes more interesting when you consider that there is a notion that Black people are treated better *because* they are Black – and yet there were Black students along with the Indians and Whites who reported that they would not expect to be treated any better.

It was interesting to see a response from a female Indian student like, "Race - I am an Indian, think blacks would be given preference" (Participant 25) and have it confirm that a perception exists that Black people get preferential treatment – and then to read a Black student's explanation for choosing the same answer, "Because they would regard me as a nobody" (Participant 48). It may or may not be true that for some of the people some of the time that race plays a role in the treatment they get. But it is clear that not all Black people are equal beneficiaries of the preferential treatment that people from other race groups believe them to get.

The results for this question showed that the majority of the youth questioned at Howard College, irrespective of race, did not have a high expectation of equal treatment at a government office, but for different reasons. At issue is the almost unanimous dissatisfaction with the people in charge that has been expressed by the youth. At the start of this section when I discussed students' attitudes toward the ministers in charge of government, I mentioned that if the youth lost trust and faith in the system this could have dire consequences for South African politics. It is one thing for the youth to feel anger at reports of corruption and fraud happening at the national level, but it is another thing for them to feel marginalised and treated badly by the people closer to home at the government offices that they go to for help. The poor performance of the people at these offices and the real or imagined preferential treatment that they give can be a bitter pill for stressed- out citizens to swallow. The treatment that citizens receive at government offices could in fact have less to do with what they think it does (preferential treatment, having connections and so on) and more to do with a range of other factors such as how well qualified the people who work at these offices are to serve them, and the resources available. The treatment received could even depend on the people seeking assistance, for instance how polite, patient or well mannered they were. The treatment given might not be a function of the system, but representative of the general nature of dealing with a bureaucracy, which can at times have its share of red tape to cut through. But even if that it is true, the kind of experience that citizens have there will contribute to their perceptions about the government and all that is "wrong" with the country.

This could lead to more people feeling left out and alienated. And it could combine with their dissatisfaction with other branches of government and the people in charge of them too. The ultimate effect of this will be to erode the confidence and trust that ordinary citizens have in the people in charge and in the system itself. And it is when citizens lose faith in the political system itself that they begin to consider acting outside it.

Process Culture

In the first four questions designed to describe the Process Culture of youth at Howard College, I chose to focus on the electoral process. Since this level of the political culture is concerned with what citizens know, feel and think about themselves as actors in the political process, Almond (1990: 17) and the most common form of participation in politics is through voting, I wanted to find out if young South Africans voted at all and what their attitudes toward it were. Figure 30 shows that just thirty-three percent of students at Howard College had voted in the last national and provincial elections, held in April, 2009., at the time of being questioned. This means that just seventeen out of fifty-one students had cast their ballots for who would be President.

Did you vote in the last national and provincial election?
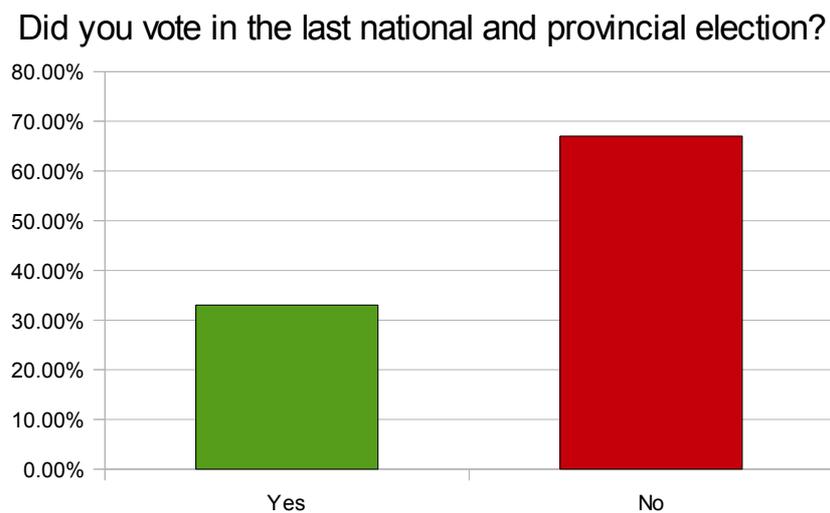
*Figure 30:*

To begin, I will discuss the results for the sub-group within the sample that did vote. This was a question with multiple parts and the next part of the question (if they answered yes to voting) asked students to select, from a list of four alternatives, the statement that best described their feelings when they cast their ballot. These results for this are represented in Table 41.

I get a feeling of satisfaction out of it	I do it only because it is my duty	I feel annoyed. It is a waste of my time	I don't feel anything in particular
41.00%	29.00%	0.00%	29.00%

Table 41: Reasons for voting in the national election

The percentages reflected in Table 41 are based on the number of students who voted, and not on the total number of students questioned.

It was small consolation to note that even if just thirty-three percent of youth at Howard College did cast their ballots in the last national election, that none of them reported that it was annoying and a waste of their time. Table 41 shows that forty-one percent of youth who voted reported that doing so gave them a feeling of satisfaction. It is important that citizens gain a certain amount of joy from the act of casting their ballot because, for some of them, this is the extent of their participation in politics. The act of casting a vote should mean something to them because it is an important part of the democratic process. I found that twenty-nine percent of youth voted out of a sense of duty, and while this is to be commended since it is part of being a good citizen, the decision to cast a vote should be motivated by more than a sense of obligation because it is the right thing to do. It should be about taking ownership of your role as a citizen. But perhaps most worryingly of all, twenty-nine percent of youth reported that they did not feel anything in particular at all when voting. For this sub-set of the sample the act of voting carries no particular feeling, not even one of duty and perhaps this can explain the high level of voter apathy among the youth. This suggests that the youth are not interested in voting because the act carries no particular excitement for them. In contrast to an older generation who can still remember what it was like to have been deprived of the right to vote, the youth of today have never *not* had the right to vote. For the so-called "born free" generation the vote was theirs at birth, waiting for them to exercise when they came of age. So it means less to them than it does for people who wanted to vote in the past under Apartheid but were

excluded from the process.

In the third part of the question, if students had answered no (to voting) then I asked them to select from a list of alternatives the reason that best expressed their reason for not. The results for this are presented in Table 42.

You were not of age to vote	You wanted to vote but were not able	You did not think your vote would change anything	Other
20.00%	14.00%	24.00%	45.00%

Table 42: Reasons for not voting in the national election

I presented what I thought was a reasonable list of alternatives to explain why someone would not have voted, but I was aware that a simple multiple choice question might not be sufficient to capture the full range of complex issues that might have figured in someone's decision not to vote. So I added an option for "Other" to accommodate those students who did not feel like the options on offer summed up their experience and invited them to explain their reason in the space provided. It was a good decision to do so because close to half of those who did not vote decided to make use of this option to explain their abstention. But of the forty-five percent who selected this option, just six students took the time to write down an explanation. The fact that so many students selected "Other" proves that there was more to their reasons for deciding not to vote than the options available could address. But perhaps due to the length of the questionnaire and the amount of time it took to fill in, more students decided to skip filling in an explanation.

The results showed that a small number of students claimed they were not of age to vote. Fewer claimed to want to vote but had not been able. More (24%) confessed that they did not think their

vote would change anything and this was the reason they did not. In terms of explaining why South African youth are apathetic about voting, this is significant. If there was a higher number of responses for wanting to vote but not being able, I would have speculated about obstacles citizens might encounter when going to vote. But since this number is so small, I will turn my attention to the response with the next biggest response – not believing your vote would change anything. If citizens do not believe that their vote will have an effect then there might not appear to be a point in taking the time to go to a polling station. In a study conducted prior to the 2014 national elections cited by News24 (2014) fifty-four percent of young adults aged between eighteen and thirty-four gave the same reason for deciding not to vote. The meaning of "nothing will change" in this context can refer to the party that wins the election – these youth believe that regardless of their vote the ANC will win and so there is no point in them participating. This could operate on two levels. On one level, ANC supporters among the youth feel like whether or not they vote their party will win. On another level, those among the youth who would like to see political change have given up because it feels like even if they vote, the support that the ANC enjoys is so great that it will not matter even if they vote against them.

This means that voter apathy among the youth could be tied to the perception that the ANC is too strong to be beaten regardless of their vote. Table 43 shows the list of responses that were given when students chose "Other" to describe the reason they did not vote.

Participant ID	Response
6	"The ANC is bound to win anyway"
12	"Was not in the country"
19	"didn't register. whoever you vote for government wins."
23	"Didnt [sic] register"
32	"I don't find it neccessary [sic] when I know the

	outcome"
36	"I forgot"

Table 43: Explanation of "other" as a reason for not voting in the national election

The content of the responses shows that three out of the six did not vote for reasons relating to ANC dominance – the result of the election was a foregone conclusion for these students.

The implications of youth voter apathy for politics in South Africa and the fabric of political culture relate to the predictions I made earlier about declining trust in public officials and the political system. I believe that these issues, while separate, are intertwined. I predicted that as a result of declining trust in the government because of corruption, maladministration and poor service delivery, citizens would begin to lose faith in first the people in charge and then over time become disillusioned with the political system itself. This does not have to follow a linear path and does not have to wait for the future. The public and the youth are losing trust in the government and the political system *right now* as shown in the results I obtained which show the negative attitude and feelings that young South Africans have toward the political authorities. I said that as citizens grew more disenchanted with the political system they would cease to participate in it and that this would lead to a decline in voter turn-out. The results for this question show that the youth are not interested in voting and it was not because they wanted to vote but were not able to. There exists a perception that their vote will not make a difference and this can in part be attributed to the dominance of the ANC at the polls. As time goes on frustration at this will mount and it will lead to citizens changing how they vote and this will result in a shift in political power.

The frustrations of the youth make this group ripe for the taking because it represents the future electorate that will replace the older generation that feels the greatest loyalty to the ANC. If not checked, the apathy of youth voters seen at present will become a general apathy to voting in the

future. The millions of youth who do not vote and have yet to come of age represent a lever for political change in South Africa. The question is whether or not the ANC will succeed in bringing them into the fold, or a different player will be able to capture their support. The EFF is one such example which targeted the youth vote in particular as part of their campaign during the national elections in 2014.

In the second question designed to describe the Process Culture of youth at Howard College I decided to focus on elections again, but this time on local elections. The whole idea of voting and elections has become bound up in the national psyche with who gets to be the President – but elections for local government are just as important to sustain a democracy. Figure 31 shows that just twenty-nine percent of youth questioned at Howard College voted in the last elections for local government which were held in May, 2011. This was slightly less than the number who voted in the national elections (33%). The small difference in turn-out between national and local elections would indicate that young South Africans are apathetic about voting in general, but a little more so when it comes to voting for local government.
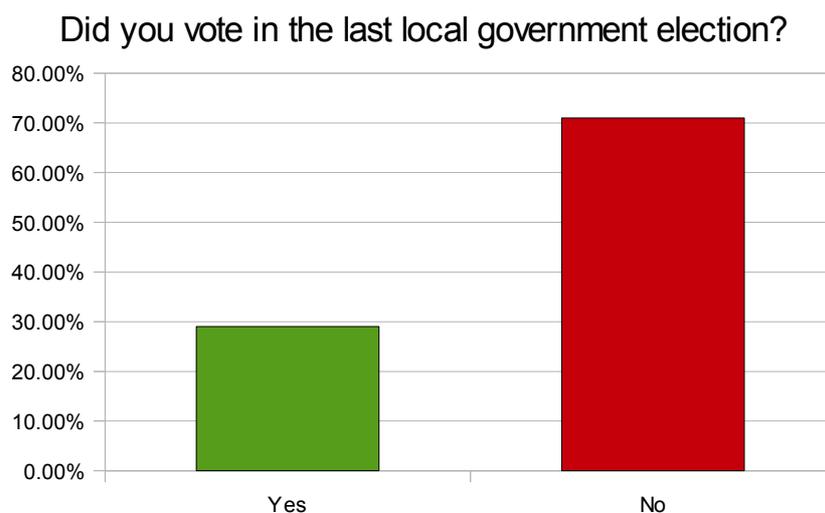
Figure 31:

This was a multiple part question and if students answered no (to voting) I asked them to select from the list of alternatives the reason why. The results for this are shown in Table 43.

You were not of age to vote	You wanted to vote but were not able	You did not think your vote would change anything	Other
16.00%	18.00%	24.00%	45.00%

Table 43: Reasons for not voting in the local elections

A small percentage of youth were unable to vote because they were not yet of legal age to do so. A slightly larger (but still small) percentage of them claimed to have wanted to vote, but were not able. It would be interesting to know what kind of obstacles they encountered, but to add yet another question to probe this in particular would have led to an even greater level of fatigue in answering these questions. The same percentage of youth who did not think their vote would change anything in the national election (24%) reported the same attitude toward local elections. As was the case with the question about national elections, forty-five percent of students chose "Other" and just six of them provided an explanation. Those explanations are shown in Table 44.

Participant ID	Response
6	"It seems as if my individual vote will have little effect."
32	"I don't find it necessary when I know the outcome"
35	"did not know"
37	"Didn't know about it."
43	"I was away from home, nevertheless I was not going to vote, because I don't see the need to."
46	"I did not vote because I didn't know my local participating candidates"

Table 44: Explanation of reasons for not voting in the local elections

The results showed that two students were not aware of the elections for local government to begin with, and one did not vote because they did not know who the candidates were. To address the first point, there is always advance notice that elections are coming up whether national or local because the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) will begin and advertise a voter registration drive. If citizens were not aware that elections are going to happen then this is evidence of an extreme parochial orientation toward politics (which is rare) in which people are unaware and uninformed about matters relating to politics and government. To address the second point, the student in question was unaware of who their local participating candidates were. The possible reasons for this are numerous but it does have implications for voter education during campaigning.

Two responses from Table 44 stand out as echoes of the sentiment that some youth expressed about not voting in national elections. Participant 6 stated, "It seems as if my individual vote will have little effect". Feelings like this can contribute to voter apathy because if one's vote will not lead to change and make a difference then there will feel like there is no point in doing it. Participant 32 said, "I don't find it necessary when I know the outcome". This relates to the point made earlier about ANC dominance at the polls. If the election results appear to be decided before the event itself then there is no point in voting.

Feinstein (2009: 28) took the position that:

> Winning the right to vote in a democratic ballot is something that has been hard-fought-for almost wherever it is possible. It is the seminal act of citizenship, the act that states that even if I spoil my ballot in protest I am participating in the democratic process, a right millions of men and especially women were deprived of for centuries.

The right to vote in South Africa was particularly was hard-fought-for, and in both a real and in a spiritual sense represents a victory and triumph of the human spirit over race -based domination and subjugation. Therefore it is shocking to note that something which was fought for so hard for so long, in a protracted struggle that people gave up their lives for, now means so little. It would appear that South African youth do not appreciate the democratic inheritance that was purchased with the blood of their forebears. Democracies endure as long as democratic values endure and to the extent that these principles are embedded, not just in the social fabric, but in the bedrock of the political culture. Each generation must teach the next a commitment to democratic values and provide them the right kind of civic and moral education that will make the youth good citizens. The results of the test of knowledge of politics that I administered in Section A of the instrument show that there is a need for future citizens to have some civic education to help them understand how politics and government functions, and their role in it.

I feel is important to point out that just because the youth do not vote that does not mean that they have rejected the democratic process and grown disillusioned with the political system – not yet at least. At present what the high level of voter apathy shows is that young South Africans are frustrated with the fact that their vote does not appear to make a difference – it feels like whether they vote or not the same party will win and nothing will change. This could lead to the youth in future adopting unconventional means of participation, by searching for modes of expression and activism that *will* make a difference and lead to a change in the status quo. These alternative avenues of participation could be democratic in nature, but violent and revolutionary means are not to be discounted depending on the extent to which trust and faith in public institutions and political authorities have eroded.

In the third question designed to describe the Process Culture of youth at Howard College I wanted

to find out if young South Africans were interested in the activities of political parties and interest groups. This relates to the second part of the definition of the Process level, which is about what citizens know, think and feel about other actors in the political process Almond (1990: 17). I asked students, "Would you say that you are interested in the activities of political parties and interest groups?" This was a multiple part question and in the first part, students could choose either Yes or No. Figure 32 shows that just thirty-seven percent of students at Howard College reported being interested in the activities of political parties and other interest groups. The majority (63%) were not interested.

Are you interested in the activities of political parties and interest groups?
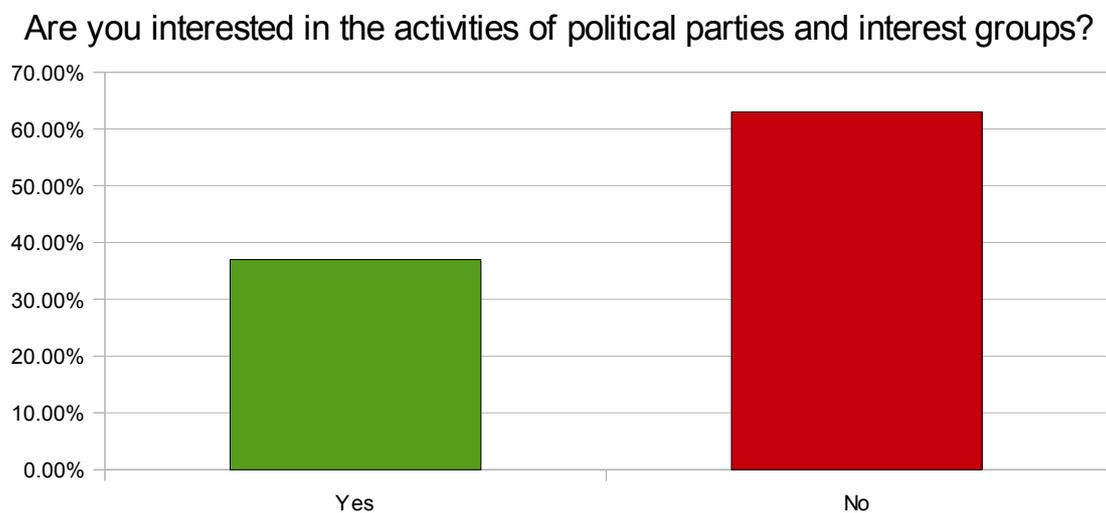
Figure 32:

There are two separate but intertwined components of political culture: a knowledge of politics and attitudes and feelings toward politics Almond and Verba (1956). These components are intertwined because the attitudes and feelings toward politics that a citizen will have will depend on the knowledge they have of politics and political affairs. This means that citizens need to follow what political parties and other interest groups are doing, to know what it is going on. The statements that political parties make and the actions they take in public and private will have implications for what happens in society, especially if the parties and groups in question are the ANC or the other

members of the tripartite alliance – COSATU and the SACP. For example the issue of the Youth Wage Subsidy that was proposed by the ANC, (essentially) vetoed by COSATU and then taken up as a rallying cry by the DA. The subsidy was eventually passed but before that happened there was a great deal of debate and political posturing over it.

This was a multiple part question, and in the next part, I asked students to explain the reason for their answer (yes or no). To begin, I will discuss the reasons given by the youth who were interested in the activities of political parties and interest groups.

The results showed that thirty-seven percent of youth at Howard College (or 19 out of 51 students) were interested in the activities of political groups and interest groups. That such a small number of youth showed a cognitive orientation toward actors in the political process other than themselves is problematic. It is problematic because it shows a lack of broad-scale engagement with what is going on in the public sphere. These events do not occur in a vacuum and the activities of political parties and interest groups will have implications for ordinary citizens who may or may not agree with what is being debated and proposed in their name. However it is positive to note that while this was a small number, there were *some* students who showed this basic level of engagement. A willingness to follow politics is a form of participation even if it is a passive one. It shows a willingness to enter into debate and engage with important issues.

Participant 1 perhaps put it best when they said, "It's good to know what's going on in South Africa. Not knowing could lead to some form of corruption by those people". This shows that an engagement with politics even just through watching the news can have an oversight function. The youth are aware that corruption happens and you need to know what is going on to keep that corruption in check.

Participant 16 said, "It is good to know what is happening in the country because whatever the political parties are doing, it has an effect on you". This shows that on some level the youth are aware of the effect that politics has on their lives, they are not totally disinterested or ignorant about the impact of the actors on their own lives. The words "It is good to know" are perhaps the simplest way to put it. It is good to know because it will have an effect on you. Although what one decides to do with that knowledge is another question altogether.

Participant 39 said, "Interested to see the activities and how it affects the living standards of the poor, as well as how relations with other [illegible] and parties". This statement shows that the youth are able to relate the activities of political parties with the changes that happen in living conditions for better or for worse. It is this kind of rational engagement that is the basis for the kind of oversight role that was suggested by Participant 1. Parliament is supposed to check the power of the Executive but when it is dominated by the same party that controls the Executive, the responsibility for oversight falls to the citizens – the majority of whom do not appear to be interested in these matters.

It is a positive sign that there are some youth who are interested in the activities of political parties and interest groups. It does not take the whole population to instigate change – all it needs in some cases is a large enough group that approaches a critical mass and then the movement will acquire a momentum all its own that includes people who were not as engaged to begin with but recognise the necessity of change. In short: the small number of youth in general who are interested in politics might be all it takes to ignite broader interest or social change. But it would be better if a larger number of youth were interested in what political parties and interest groups were involved in to begin with.

Now I will discuss the reasons that young South Africans at Howard College gave for not being

interested in the activities of political parties and interested groups. The responses obtained indicated that some youth were just not interested in politics, perhaps because they found it boring or did not believe it had an effect on them, while other youth expressed dissatisfaction with politicians as a reason for their lack of interest. These were the main reasons that the sixty-three percent of youth at Howard College were not interested in the activities of political parties and interest groups.

"It is boring" said Participant 8, referring to the reason that they were not interested. It is true that matters relating to politics and government are not the stuff of blockbuster cinema. If not for the occasional scandal or allegation of fraud and corruption politics to the ordinary citizen would be boring indeed. The point is that politics and parliament is not meant to be theatre and it is not supposed to be watched with a bowl of popcorn – it's not meant to be entertaining. And this could be part of the reason that the youth are not interested in it. For a person with a short attention span long debates in parliament are not riveting. I am not certain what could be done to make politics appear more exciting and less boring so that fewer youth respond "politics don't interest me" (Participant 32.)

Some youth at Howard College cited dissatisfaction with politicians as a reason to explain their lack of interest. Participant 2 stated, "Because people who are in politics the? got what they want and leave people with hunger, when they need help". This response shows that some youth feel let down by the people in power and it is this kind of sentiment that contributes to the erosion of faith and trust in public officials and institutions I mentioned earlier. One word summed it up for Participant 23, "corruption". There is a perception among the youth that some politicians are out for themselves and do not care about people like them.

Participant 41 raised an interesting issue in their response: "Politics in the country can get very dangerous and out of hand, because every other party wants as many people on their side, they could hurt you for choosing this other party". This means that apart from apathy, finding politics boring and being alienated by corruption, some youth find the whole idea of being interested in politics dangerous, and possibly even life- threatening.

In the final question I designed to describe the Process Culture of youth at Howard College, I chose to focus on civic engagement through participation in extra-curricular activities. I wanted to find out if these young people participated in extra-curricular activities because McFarland and Thomas (2006: 402) found that youth who engage in extra-curricular activities were predisposed to civic participation and acquired a greater dimension of civic competence. Figure 33 shows that thirty-seven percent of youth at Howard College (or just 19 out of 51 students) participated in extra-curricular activities.

### Do you participate in extra-curricular activities?
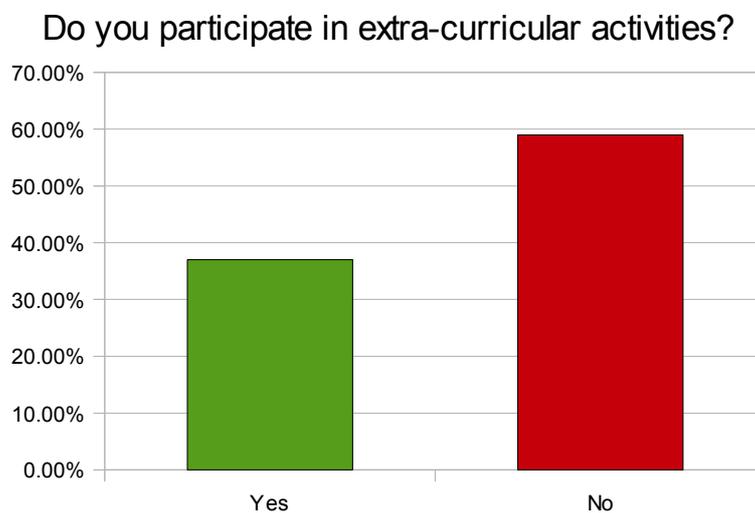
Figure 33:

The significance is that youth who do participate in extra-curricular activities will gain the "capacities, motives and relationships necessary for adult political involvement" McFarland and

Thomas (2006: 402) that will not only make them better citizens, but provide them with an advantage over their peers who did not, when they meet on the opposite sides of the same issue.

I stated earlier that in the future, due to disenchantment with the political system, the youth might resort to unconventional forms of political participation and begin to work outside of the system that they have lost faith in. I stated that the character of this participation could be democratic but that it might also not. This is where the importance of civic engagement comes in. I would contend that youth who have experience with civic engagement through membership of voluntary organisations will be predisposed to a more democratic (read non-violent) form of participation than youth who did not. Even when forced to work outside the system that has failed them, these youth will be able to set up structures and co-ordinate them as a result of the experience gained working together with others in voluntary organisations.

Almond and Verba (1956) also emphasised the importance of voluntary associations to develop an individual's spirit of civic co-operation and engagement with government. I do not mean that youth who do not build up their capacity through membership of voluntary organisations are doomed to failure in future civic engagement or political participation. I mean that youth who do take part in these kinds of activities will be predisposed for success because it will help them to grow accustomed to what might seem hard or difficult at first. For example, public speaking or speaking with new people. An aspect of participation in extra-curricular activities and youth voluntary organisations is speaking to people and learning how to communicate with others. This can help shy youth to overcome their fears and become more effective communicators, which will help them in situations such as explaining their point of view to a government official or addressing a meeting of like -minded individuals.

Part of the importance of participation in extra-curricular activities and other voluntary organisations is learning to work together with others. It is a given that the individual who tries to influence the government with the help of others (for example, ratepayers' associations) will at least be more successful than the lone wolf who goes it alone.

Voluntary associations are the prime means by which the function of mediating between the individual and the state is performed Almond and Verba (1956: 245). They are the means through which individuals are able to pool their influence and acumen to better represent their needs and demands to the government. Individuals who are members of voluntary organisations gain an advantage in the acquisition of skills and competencies which will allow them to participate in civic society, and better represent their grievances to government when the need arises. But since so few youth at Howard College reported engaging in the kinds of activities that build these competencies, this means that fewer of the future electorate will be as well equipped to deal with the demands of dealing with the government.

This was a multiple part question, and if students answered that they did not participate, I asked them to explain the reason that they did not.

The main reason that youth at Howard College reported not participating in extra-curricular activities was due to not having the time. Participant 51 stated, "I have never found time to participate in such activities" and this response was typical of the type received. Perhaps these students are too preoccupied with their studies to consider taking part in extra-curricular activities.

Policy Culture

The policy culture is described in terms of what ordinary individuals know, think, and feel about the

internal and external policies of the system Almond (1990: 17). In the first of three questions designed to describe the Policy Culture of youth at Howard College, I tried to measure students' satisfaction with government's policies to improve the country. I asked them, "Do you think the government is working hard to make the country a better place for you and your family?" This was a multiple part question and in the first part, students could choose either Yes or No. Figure 34 shows that thirty-one percent of youth at Howard College (or 16 out of 51 students) answered in the affirmative. The majority however (69%) did not think that the government was working hard to make the country a better place for them and their family. This reflects a broad dissatisfaction with the government and its policies that are supposed to be creating a better life for all.

Do you think the government is working hard to make the country a better place?
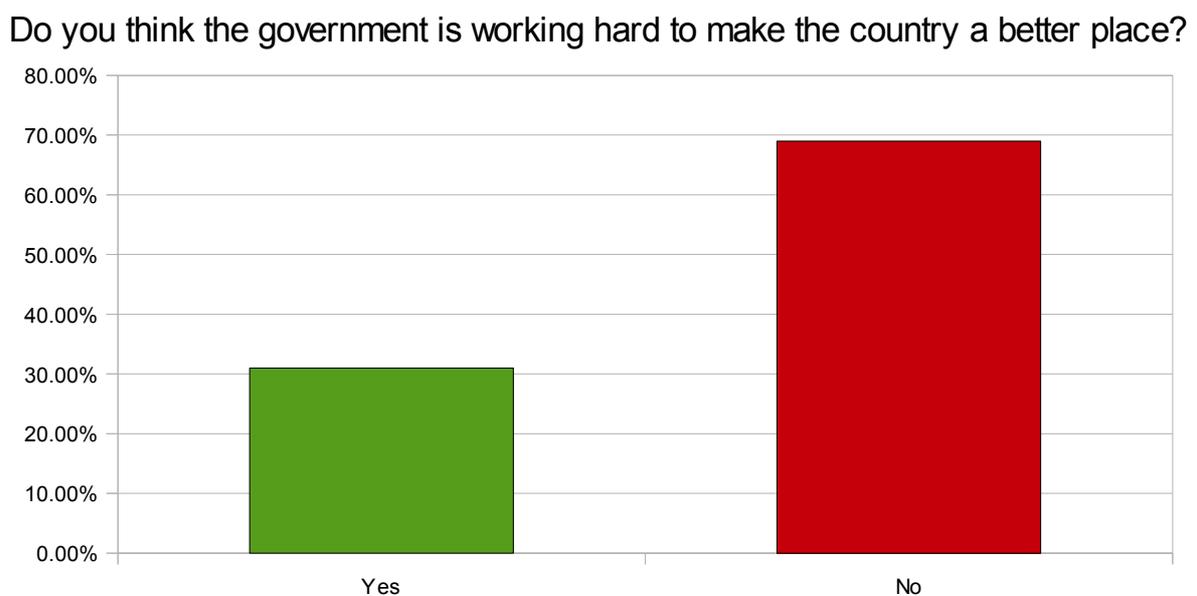

Figure 34:

This was a multiple part question, and in the next part, students were invited to explain the reason for their answer in the space provided. To begin, I will discuss the reasons that were given to explain why the youth thought the government was working hard to make the country a better place.

The responses obtained were favourable, and indicated that some of the youth have faith in the government to deliver on its promises of a better life through development. These youth recognise that there has been progress, but point out that it has been slow. These responses show that there are youth who have not become alienated from government due to a lack of delivery on its part. These youth acknowledge that progress has been slow but still believe that the government is working hard to deliver for them. The youth believe that, "You can see the results" (Participant 12) which means that they are aware of the results of policies in action. The wording of the responses indicates a first person experience of the policies that have resulted in improvements in quality of life for citizens. For example, Participant 45 replied, "There are lot of changes that has occurred that surrounds me as a one being". This means that for some of these youth, development and progress are not mere statistics, but tangible improvements that have happened to and around them. I stated earlier that the delivery of housing and clean water were sites of protest for citizens in South Africa. As much as government has made progress in building houses for the poor, there are still more poor who need homes. So while there will be those who applaud government for building houses, there will be others who will protest that not enough has been done. The youth in this sub-group fall into the first category: "Yes - for example he is doing and still fighting to end all the shacks in S.A." Participant 46.

The purpose of this question was to infer what youth thought about the policies government was pursuing to achieve development, that is, to make the country a better place, without referring to the particular policies which the youth might not be familiar with. I wanted to measure their perception of how well government was meeting its goals through a question that was generally worded. I found that the majority of youth at Howard College had a negative perception of the progress that government had made, and this translated into a negative perception of the success of public policy to achieve the eradication of poverty and create development.

The overall content of the responses obtained was negative toward the government. There was the perception voiced that "Many efforts made only to gain a good name amongst voters" Participant 11. This indicates that some youth think that the government acts solely to gain support in the form of votes – not to serve the citizens. This was echoed by the sentiment, "Because they dont're? care about us" Participant 20. The content of the responses showed deep dissatisfaction with policies, and this dissatisfaction has the potential to turn into alienation if not checked. For example in the response of, "Too much corruption and not enough follow through" (Participant 25) the same grievance with government that has come up before rears its head again. Even race figured in one student's response, "Some races are overlooked and not treated fairly or given what they deserve because of their race" (Participant 16.) I could make a report of each response that was obtained, but the overall impression would be the same: the youth are deeply dissatisfied with public policy in South Africa.

The implications of the deep dissatisfaction of the youth with public policy is connected with what I talked about earlier concerning the erosion of faith and trust in public institutions and public officials. If the youth feel that the government is failing them, that the policies being implemented are inadequate, then their dissatisfaction will continue to mount until the events I mentioned earlier come to pass. These include declining voter turn-out, a possible move to operate outside of the system that has failed them or switching their allegiance to a political party that speaks to their feelings of dissatisfaction.

In the second question designed to describe the Policy Culture of youth at Howard College I chose to measure the attitudes and feelings of young South Africans toward public policy in South Africa by asking them to consider the impact of the national government on their lives. I asked students, "Thinking of the national government, how much effect do you think its activities, the laws passed

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and so on, have on your day-to-day life?" Students could choose between: A great effect, Some effect or None. The results for this question are shown in Table 45.

A great effect	Some effect	None
22.00%	65.00%	14.00%

Table 45: The effect ascribed to the national government on daily life

The results showed that sixty-five percent of youth at Howard College ascribed "some effect" to the national government on their lives. This was the largest block of responses. A small number of youth ascribed no impact to the national government on their lives. This was evidence of a parochial orientation toward politics since the characteristic of this type (which is rare) is ignorance about government. The important point about the responses for this question is that the youth at Howard College are aware that the national government has an impact on their day-to-day lives. If more youth had ascribed no impact in their response this would have been worrying indeed. The magnitude of the impact that the youth perceived the national government to have is interesting. Just twenty-two percent of youth ascribed a great effect, whereas the majority of them indicated that it had some effect. This means that the exact level of influence that the youth believes that national government exerts on their lives varies.

This was a multiple part question, and in the next part I asked students to explain the reason for their answer. One of the responses given to explain why the national government had no impact on daily life was, "They are not implemented correctly nor to such a degree that they filters down and [illegible] to corruption and lack of respect to laws/policy etc, these activities are ignored by those "supposed" to be implementing them" (Participant 39). This response was interesting because it implies that since government policies are not implemented correctly, they do not have an effect on the life of that student. The response even goes as far to implicate those who are supposed to be

implementing those policies – the people who occupy positions in the political system.

To explain the reason that they ascribed a great effect to national government, Participant 14 said, "Government dictates how we live our lives: economically, politically, socially and culturally". This response shows that some youth appreciate the legislative power of national government more than most. The government has far reaching power to influence how people live through the laws that are passed and policies that are implemented. It was positive to note that this power was not lost on (some of) the youth. Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) was cited as another reason to ascribe a great effect to the activities of national government on daily life. Participant 31 stated that "BEE and affirmative action governed admissions for education. Road taxes are high". There was also the perception that "it is highly difficult in terms of BEE and Affirmative action. Non-black citizens have difficulty finding jobs etc" (Participant 23).

To explain the reason that they ascribed "some" effect to national government on their lives, Participant 31 stated, "The national credit act had an effect that everyone knew about, while others are sometimes unknown to us, but we still follow it". In this response, reference was made to a particular piece of legislation that was seen to have observable effects on real life. As Participant 8 put it, "we are governed by laws" and it is for this reason that the government has some effect on all of our lives. The responses that justified "some" effect showed that the youth were aware of the impact of national government on their lives, and were able to provide examples of the kind of impact.

The results for this question showed that the youth were aware of the influence of the national government on their daily lives, and were able to provide examples of the exact nature of the impact. This shows that the youth are not only aware of what is going on and are able to make

judgements about it. It is one thing to possess information, it is another to be able to use that information to draw a meaningful conclusion. And the content of the responses obtained for this question showed that the youth at Howard College were able to make reasoned conclusions about the impact of the national government on their lives.

In the final question designed to describe the Policy Culture of youth at Howard College I investigated the contemporary issues and policies that were important to young South Africans. As Almond and Powell (1978: 39) put it, "To understand the politics of a system, one must understand the issues and preference distributions salient to those involved". In a multiple part question, the first question I put to students was, "In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing South Africa today?" This was an open -ended question, and students could write their answer in the space provided. By asking the youth what they thought the biggest challenges facing the country were, I sought to determine the issues that were important to them. These issues would then highlight the most pressing policies for them.

The results showed that apart from corruption in the government, the issues of racism, HIV/AIDS, crime and unemployment were the biggest issues facing South African youth. In the next part of the question I asked students whether they thought the government was doing enough to address these challenges. Students could choose Yes or No. Figure 35 shows that just ten percent of youth at Howard College (or 5 out of 51 students) believed that the government was doing enough to address the challenges that they had identified.

Is the govt doing enough to address these challenges?
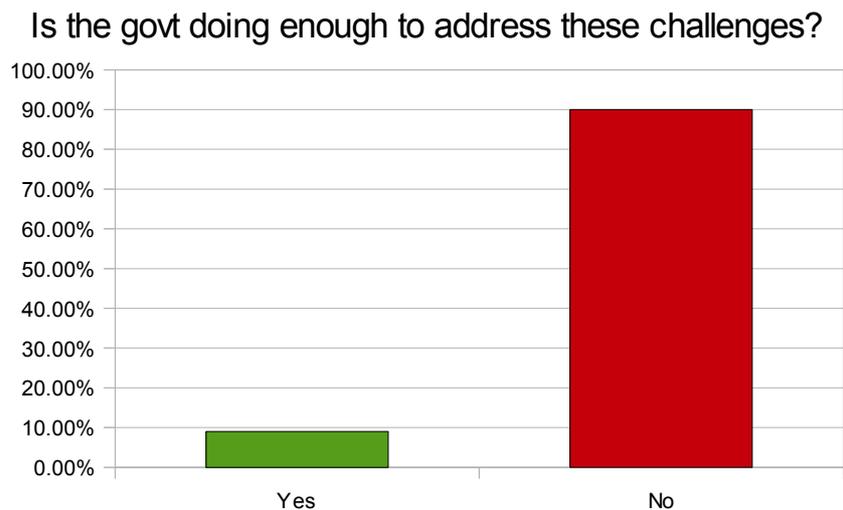
Figure 35:

In the next part of the same question, I asked students to explain the reason for their answer (whether or not the government was doing enough to address these challenges). Among the reasons cited for believing that the government was doing enough was, "yes he has provided grants and new houses" Participant 46. This once again shows that are those who would laud the government for the progress that it has made, and those who would protest that it was not enough. A response like "The government try to reduce unemployment rates by providing government enterprises to the youth, provide services and address the basic needs to the people" (Participant 44) shows that the government has a core of support among the youth, despite the alienation and dissatisfaction that comes through in some responses.

The reasons cited for saying that the government was not doing enough included, "I think with HIV/AIDS they are trying but with crime and poverty nothing is being down. People are still suffering" Participant 24. This response shows that Participant 24 thinks that the government is trying hard to address one of the challenges he identified, but when it comes to crime and poverty, the same effort is not being applied. Corruption was cited as a reason the government were not doing enough by more than one student. For example, Participant 16 replied, "corruption. money

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laundering. Mismanagement". This echoes the earlier responses that decried the corruption of the ministers in charge of government. The effectiveness of the government's policies to deal with the challenges identified is open to debate, but there certainly exists a perception among the youth that the policies being implemented are inadequate and hampered by corruption in the government departments.

In the next part of the question, I asked students to explain what they thought would be the best policies to deal with the challenges they identified. The recommendation made by Participant 44 was that "Government needs to provide opportunities for people in the rural areas. Support the HIV programmes and get people to be exposed to these programmes in the media. Employ poverty reduction in schools and also support the government business enterprises". Participant 25 called for "Free basic education" and Participant 42 called on government to "increase security. provide free education that is of quality. provide free housing for those cannot affort [sic]". In general, the youth recommended getting rid of corrupt politicians and creating a mechanism to ensure that only qualified people were put in charge. There were also calls to create a greater social safety net to help the poor.

My discussion of the Policy level would not be complete without talking about the government's policy on the youth and how they engage with this important group. I stated earlier that youth unemployment in South Africa is a pressing problem. This is due to the high levels of youth that are unemployed. A World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Risk 2014 report cited by Fin24 (2014) "more than 50% of young South Africans between 15 and 24 are unemployed". Indeed, unemployment was cited as one of the biggest challenges facing South Africa today by the students I questioned. The government therefore needs to address this problem for two reasons. The first reason is that high levels of youth unemployment are in general not a good thing for the economy.

And the second reason is that improving the economic situation of the youth will win the government their support at the polls. As part of a plan to combat the problem of high youth unemployment a youth wage subsidy was mooted which would provide tax breaks for employers to give jobs to the youth. According to SAPA (2012) "The subsidy, in the form of a R5bn tax credit over three years, was meant to be introduced on April 1 [2012]" but "a major obstacle was the Congress of SA Trade Unions' fears that it would lead to employers getting rid of older workers". This shows the influence that the tripartite alliance wields, that it was able to block legislation from being passed. The proposed legislation would have provided incentives to take on young people and provide them with much needed experience and training but it was delayed in being passed and came into effect only in 2014 – but the value of the incentives provided to employers had decreased from R5 Billion to R.3 Billion Mail and Guardian (2013). This shows that while the youth are on the agenda and are the subject of legislation aimed at improving their situation in society, the politics of compromise and negotiation that make it happen can be an obstacle to realising the goal.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the answers to questions that related to youth attitudes and feelings toward the political system itself, how it works and its policies. I have discussed a set of questions relating to each of these aspects in turn, and before turning to the grand project of tying together all the findings and implications thereof in the next chapter, I will provide a short summary of the key points I drew in order to remind the reader of the significance of each level of political culture in relation to the whole.

System level

If I could summarise the findings of this section in one sentence it would be: the youth are not happy with the political system. The predominant reasons for this were corruption and poor service

delivery. The South African youth I questioned had a low opinion of the ministers in charge of government, and a low expectation of equal treatment at the hands of a public servant or a government official. The reasons cited were not being the right race (not Black) and corruption. The one positive point was that despite their relative unhappiness with the political system, youth are still proud to be called South African. This means that whatever resentment they might harbour toward the people in charge of the political system, this has not transferred to the South African state and the country as a whole.

Process level

I found a high degree of voter apathy among youth. This was based on the finding that sixty-seven percent of the students I questioned had not voted in the last elections for national government which were held in 2009. The reasons given for not voting despite being eligible included the feeling that their vote would not change anything (24%). An even higher percentage (71%) reported not voting in the last elections for local government which were held in 2011. This underscores their disinterest in voting and also shows that youth care less about local government elections than they do about national. If enough people do not vote in an election this will cast doubt over the legitimacy of the government that has been elected. I am not saying that this will happen in South Africa in the future. Just that if this trend continues, it *could* happen.

I also asked whether or not students were interested in the activities of political parties and interest groups. The results showed that students were not. I also found that students were not interested in extra-curricular activities. Taken together both these findings suggest a lack of civic engagement and a lack of preparedness for future engagement of this sort.

Policy level

Apart from corruption in the government, the issues of racism, HIV/AIDS, crime and unemployment were identified by youth as the biggest issues facing them today. The problems of crime and unemployment are intertwined since crime can be a cause of unemployment. These issues are significant not just as the problems that youth would like to see fixed, but as the flashpoints for future conflict. And just ten percent of youth at Howard College believed that the government was doing enough to address these challenges. Apart from corruption in the government, the issues of racism, HIV/AIDS, crime and unemployment were identified by youth as the biggest issues facing them today. The problems of crime and unemployment are intertwined since crime can be a cause of unemployment. These issues are significant not just as the problems that youth would like to see fixed, but as the flashpoints for future conflict. And just ten percent of youth at Howard College believed that the government was doing enough to address these challenges. There can often be a gap between perception and reality, which in this case means that despite the government`s best efforts to deal with difficult problems, little progress is visible to the ordinary citizen. Earlier, I discussed how the government's efforts to deal with housing the homeless were seen as not enough by those I questioned. But I then contrasted student perceptions with the reality of trying to solve such a big problem with only so many resources. It is the case that however much progress is made, it will never been seen as enough. But a way needs to be found address the dissatisfaction and the hostility that arises from the perception that too little is being delivered. In general, there was strong support from the students I questioned for the rooting out of corrupt politicians and the establishment of a mechanism to ensure that only the qualified were employed

Chapter 7: Summary of Findings and Conclusion

The aim of this project was to find out about the political culture of students at Howard College. The concept of political culture is vast and can be open-ended depending on which definition of the term you choose to adopt. I chose to adopt the definition made popular in *The Civic Culture* by Almond and Verba (1956) because it appeared to encapsulate all that seemed relevant to understanding the relationship between citizens as voters and the government. Almond and Verba (1956) defined the concept of political culture in terms of two separate but interconnected components: a knowledge of politics and attitudes and feelings toward politics. These were the objects that I chose to focus on and designed the instrument I used for data collection to reflect this.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A dealt with knowledge of politics and tested students on their knowledge of the political system in South Africa. I divided the political system into three levels based on the functionalist approach to the study of political systems used by Almond and Powell because it provided a useful structure within which to work. Instead of approaching the political system in South Africa as one big edifice using a functionalist approach enabled me to separate the different parts from the whole and devise questions that dealt with each. I divided the political system into three levels: a System level, a Process level and a Policy level. These levels, much like the twin components of a political culture, are separate but intertwined.

I asked four questions relating to each level of the political system. The results of the test were that students passed two out of the four questions related to the System and the Process level, but failed all of the questions that related to the Policy level. Almond and Verba (1956) found that participants in their study who had a tertiary education knew more about politics than participants who did not. All things being relative, it is possible that the low levels of information I found are in fact higher than what a control group of random youth without a tertiary education would exhibit. I would

explain the low levels of information that I found in terms of the fact that these youth have not completed their education yet, and that their education once complete will predispose them to be better informed citizens. The reason for this is that their education will have enhanced their reasoning and increased their curiosity and desire to be informed. However all things being equal, this might not be true for all graduates and even if it were, the magnitude of the effect could in fact differ for a number of reasons. For example relative access to television and the internet or majoring in a field that disposes one to be more interested in public affairs, such as political science or media studies.

Under the System level I asked students to name national ministers in charge of key portfolios and more than half of them were able to name just one, the minister for Finance. Next I asked students if they knew who their ward councillor was, and just thirty-three percent of them did. A ward councillor is more accessible than a national minister who dwells in Pretoria, and if these students could not name a single national minister but more than half could state the name and party affiliation of the ward councillor, this would have indicated a cognitive orientation toward politics that matters. And it would have mitigated to an extent only being able to correctly identify one out of three national ministers.

The next two questions that more than half of students passed related to being able to differentiate between state and government, and correctly guessing what the job of the state President entailed. It was important that a high percentage of students could pick the right answer when it came to telling the difference between state and government, because the lines between the two often blur in South African politics and one has to be politically aware to read past the deliberate rhetoric meant to conflate the government of the ANC with the state. Or else one would believe that one has to vote for the ANC to get a state pension. The sample of students questioned at Howard College

demonstrated some political savvy in their ability to differentiate between state and government, and provide an accurate description of the state President's role and duties. It is important to understand what the President does since so much is made of voting for him during elections. A vote has an effect and being able to name what the President does in practice makes for a better informed voter.

Under the Process level I first asked students to name the leaders of the main national political parties, and this was the first and the last question that had such a high level of correct responses – approaching almost one hundred percent. It appears to be a given that the youth know who the main political leaders are, even if they do not know who the people in charge of particular portfolios are. Just over half of all students questioned (55%) got the next question correct. This question related to the magic number of a two-thirds majority which is needed in parliament to make an amendment to the Constitution. It is important for the electorate to know this because changes to the Constitution will affect the laws that are passed. And these will affect their lives for better or for worse.

Responses to the next two questions that dealt with the Process level were failures. I asked a question relating to the electoral process. This question focused on how MPs were elected to parliament. Just eight percent of students knew the correct answer. The results of the test as a whole were a mixed bag because the students scored well (and by "well" I mean passed) on some of the big ticket issues such as being to tell the difference between state and government, or knowing a two-thirds majority was necessary to amend the Constitution: but on some of the other (if not more) important issues they were stumped. The procedure which governs how MPs are elected to parliament places them beyond the direct accountability of the electorate. But if no one knows what the procedure is in the first place then how can they be expected to know there is a flaw in it? The final question I asked that related to the Process level had to do with the tripartite alliance and again

there was just a fraction of students who were able to name the members of it. I explained the importance of the tripartite alliance earlier in Chapter Four but it bears repeating that it allows COSATU and the SACP to influence the parliamentary process – without having to win a single seat in that body..

As I stated earlier, the students I questioned failed all the questions I asked related to the Policy level. On the whole, students at Howard College were not aware that the Executive (and not the Legislature) is responsible for the design and implementation of public policy in South Africa. This speaks to students being unaware of what a separation of powers means. It is one thing to have a liberal Constitution with the trappings of a democracy, but if the citizens it is meant to benefit have no idea what any of it is or how it works, then the protection it is meant to afford is not as effective. Close to half (but not close enough: 43%) of students knew about the landmark ruling that came about through the effort of the TAC, but small fractions were aware of the R2.4 Billion that came out of state coffers to prop up the regime in Swaziland, and what SADC was. South Africa holds a position of influence and power in the region of southern Africa and I wanted to build this into the questionnaire by asking questions that related to this.

The results of the test of knowledge of politics that I administered show that youth at Howard College are under-informed but not un-informed about the political system in South Africa. However at a deeper level, the youth were not informed *at all* about the matters relating to policy that I tested them on. The implications of these findings in the broader context of youth participation in politics in South Africa are three-fold.

The first point is that citizens in their role as voters need to learn about how the political and electoral system functions to understand the significance of their vote. If the youth do not

understand how the political system functions at a basic level, for example in terms of electoral practice and the procedures governing how MPs gain their seats in parliament, then this generation will not be able to provide citizen oversight. Just as parliament has a role in checking the Executive branch of government, so to do citizens and civil society have a similar obligation. And being able to check the government when it threatens civil liberties or gets too corrupt is dependent on knowing what the rules governing the system are.

The second point is that it is crucial that citizens be able to name the people in charge of government because this will let them track and evaluate their performance, which will impact on the decision to vote these people back into power at the next election. The importance of even a casual engagement with political and public affairs is crucial to track the performance of the government to determine if promises made during elections are being delivered on. In the marketplace consumers trust peer reviews of products to make their decision when purchasing a product or service. The political equivalent of this is listening to reports in the media about government. This will inform them if officials are involved in unethical conduct or if promised projects are bearing fruit. And knowing this should affect their decision to vote or abstain.

The third implication relates to democratic civic education. In some countries such as the United States, high school students are taught about politics and government in civics classes. In South Africa civic education is not part of the public school curriculum, but through a USAID-sponsored programme called *Democracy for All* students in some high schools are being taught about citizen participation in democratic politics Brilliant (2000) cited in Ernst and Finkel (2005: 335). Ernst and Finkel (2005) used this programme to evaluate the impact of democratic civic education on South African high school students. The study focused on the effect of civic education on political knowledge and democratic values and skills. The findings showed that civics classes had

"substantial effects on students' basic political knowledge" Ernst and Finkel (2005: 358). In a country where the lines between state and government can often blur, the curriculum for civic instruction in high schools could be similarly compromised – but it is crucial that young people are given the necessary instruction to prepare them for their future role as voters and citizens. This could take the form of classes that just provide information about the Constitution and electoral process or it could include building civic skills of the kind developed in extra-curricular activities that McFarland and Thomas (2006) referred to.

Following from these three points, I would recommend that civic education classes be introduced in all high schools in South Africa. These classes should be compulsory and are in fact as necessary as sex education in a country where the number of people infected with HIV numbers in the millions. I recommend that civic education in South African high schools should focus on two important things. The first thing is education about the political system and the Constitution. Citizens need to understand from a young age that there is a difference between the state and the government and allegiance to the nation does not mean allegiance to a particular political party. The questions that students failed in the political information test I administered are areas that should be highlighted in the civic education curriculum. For example, understanding who decides which candidates become MPs. The second important thing that civic education in South African high schools should focus on is building the skills needed for civic engagement in adult life. It is important to teach youth how to work together as a group to achieve a common goal. I quoted McFarland and Thomas (2006) to show how participating in extracurricular activities can benefit later adult civic participation. If civic education in high schools could foster the same kind of values and build similar skills then this will produce youth that are better prepared to be good citizens. It would also address the areas for concern that were revealed by the second part of the questionnaire, where I discussed youth attitudes and feelings toward politics. For example, the high level of voter apathy. Perhaps if youth were better educated about voting and its importance then this make them want to vote. Effective

civic education could also spur participation through other means, such as getting involved in local organisations in the community.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The second part, Section B, dealt with the second component of political culture defined earlier: attitudes and feelings toward politics. The design of this section also reflected the functionalist approach to the study of political systems that I mentioned earlier.

My findings related to the System level were mixed. I found that students at Howard College did not have a high opinion of the ministers in charge in government. The main reasons for this were corruption and poor service delivery. This negative sentiment was countered however by the overwhelming number (86%) who reported being proud to be called a South African – despite the corruption and other factors cited for being dissatisfied with the government. But in the next question I found that a similar number (80%) had a low expectation of equal treatment at the hands of a public servant or government official. The reasons cited were not being the right race (not Black) and corruption. In the broader context of youth engagement with politics these findings indicate a low level of trust in public institutions and officials. The consequences of this were discussed in Chapter Five but it bears repeating that one of the results of the youth losing trust in the political system is abstention from voting. As Hirschman (1978) pointed out, one of the two main reactions to discontent with an organisation (in this case political system or party) is to vocalise one's grievances and attempt to make a difference. The other main reaction is to cease your support and switch your allegiance. I am reluctant to phrase the response of the youth to corruption, discrimination (real or imagined) and poor service delivery in terms of either/or because it is possible for them to react in a combination of these ways. The youth could start out using their voice to change the status quo and end up switching their support or ceasing to participate

altogether when this does not work. The implications of this include a decline in voter turnout and/or perhaps increased support for other political parties as preferences shift.

It was interesting to note in this section that while some youth did not expect to get equal treatment because they were not Black, the Black students still indicated that they did not expect to get fair treatment either for other reasons. This shows that race continues to operate as a factor in the minds of the youth, but does not perhaps have the effect they think it does.

The first question I asked that related to the Process level had to do with whether or not students at Howard College had voted in the last elections for national government, which were held in 2009. The results showed that sixty-seven percent of students had in fact not voted. An even higher number (71%) reported not voting in the last elections for local government which were held in 2011. This shows a high level of voter apathy among the youth. Much of the arguments made about the political significance of this group rest on the fact they represent the next generation of voters – and yet they're not interested in voting. Among the reasons given for not voting despite being eligible included the feeling that their vote would not change anything (24%). The dominance of the ANC means that short of a massive shift, a vote against them really will not change anything and perhaps it is this sentiment that leads many young people to believe that their vote will not make a difference. On the other hand, it could be that the youth are satisfied with the ANC and the perception is that whether or not they vote the outcome they want (an ANC victory) will still be achieved.

A possible danger of voter apathy in general is that if too few citizens turn out at the polls then the election result will not be considered credible. A case in point was the presidential elections held in Egypt in 2014 that I mentioned in Chapter Five. The voting period had to be extended because so

few citizens had turned out, in fact less than fifty percent. If the current trend of voter apathy among the youth persists then this has implications for voter turnout in future elections when the youth are no longer the young, but mature age citizens.

The next question I asked related to the Process level focused on whether or not students were interested in the activities of political parties and interest groups. The results showed that students were not. The implication of this for youth political participation is that the youth are not interested in politics – and people do not participate in what does not interest them. The importance attached to voting cannot be stressed enough, but this is still a casual form of engagement and participation. I mentioned earlier that citizens could perform an oversight role of their own in checking the government – but a pre-requisite for this would be more than a casual engagement with political participation. This feeds into the last question I asked related to this level, which was about engagement in extra-curricular activities. I wanted to find out if youth at Howard College engaged in extra-curricular activities since McFarland and Thomas (2006) found that youth who did gained important skills for later in life civic participation. I found that just thirty-seven percent of students did participate in an extra-curricular activity. The outcome of these findings is that youth at Howard College are not very interested in political activities nor are they well prepared for later adult civic participation.

In the questions I asked relating to the Policy level I wanted to find out what students' attitudes and feelings were toward public policy in South Africa. I asked them for their opinion on what the biggest challenges facing South Africa were in order to find out the key policy areas important to them. Their responses showed that apart from corruption in the government, the issues of racism, HIV/AIDS, crime and unemployment were the biggest issues facing South African youth. I also asked students if they thought the government was doing enough to face these challenges as a way

to measure their satisfaction with the policies already in place. Just ten percent of youth at Howard College believed that the government was doing enough to address the challenges that they had identified. The implication of this is that it feeds into the wider dissatisfaction with government that has been a theme in the responses obtained to earlier questions. As I stated earlier the reactions to this dissatisfaction have a range of responses, but are well explained using the concepts of voice and exit. Youth who are dissatisfied with government's policies can attempt to articulate their frustrations to bring about change, or exit, and find private means to deal with their needs. For example, using private healthcare when public is not good enough. But it should be noted that finding private sector alternatives to what the government offers is not an option open to all.

I asked students to explain what they thought would be the best policies to deal with the challenges they identified. In general, the youth recommended getting rid of corrupt politicians and creating a mechanism to ensure that only qualified people were put in charge. There were also calls to create a greater social safety net to help the poor. In the broader context of what young South Africans want from the government in terms of policies, this shows a leaning in favour of a state that is managed well and by people with training for their duties, in addition to creating a more benevolent state that takes care of those who cannot take care of themselves.

I set out to describe two things when I began this project: first, how much youth at Howard College knew about politics in their country, and second, their attitudes and feelings toward the political system. I discovered that the youth I studied did not know much about their political system, and failed several key questions, in particular those related to policy. In the end, youth at Howard College passed four questions in a test that consisted of twelve. This is a cause for great concern because at the most basic level the knowledge one has is what determines your analysis of a situation and response to it. In the context of politics it is crucial for citizens to be informed about

the legislation being passed in their name, and the activities of political parties and interest groups. A sign of an approaching storm is dark clouds – but if you cannot link the one with the other then the signs in advance mean nothing.

The second thing I set out to describe was the attitudes and feelings of youth at Howard College toward their political system. I found that these attitudes and feelings were mixed, but uniform across gender and race where the response was almost unanimous. The youth at Howard College have lost trust in how the government is run, and are not satisfied with the pace of service delivery. These young people have lost trust in the people who are meant to serve them and do not expect a high level of service at a public office. But despite this are still proud to be called South African. This means that even though there is much that can be fixed, the youth are not so jaded and alienated as to be ashamed to live here. This is significant because it means that at the extreme, emigration as a form of exit in response to all that is perceived to be wrong is not (yet) being considered. The youth I studied were apathetic toward voting and disinterested in politics. There was no significant sign of civic engagement or the potential for it. HIV/AIDS featured among the issues that the youth felt more could be done to address, as did corruption, crime and unemployment. The youth wanted more interventions by the government to deal with these issues, including the creation of a mechanism that would ensure that only qualified people were allowed to work in government to root out corruption and prevent maladministration.

In South Africa, a fraction of the population gains entry to tertiary study and of that fewer still make it to graduation if they do not drop out. This means that the students I studied are in a sense part of a (relatively) privileged elite, despite differences in socio-economic background. I did not have a control group of random working class or unemployed youth to compare these results with, so I am not able to speculate about the similarities and differences between youth at university and those

who are not. But what I can do is speculate that by virtue of their tertiary educations the youth I studied are predisposed for success, even though the economic landscape promises nothing. The advantages that the youth I studied will gain from their tertiary education will prepare them to become future leaders. The results obtained indicate that the leadership material in the sample is not promising – students were apathetic about both voting (which reflects a casual engagement with political participation) and about involvement in extra-curricular activities of the sort that will promote the skills needed to become leaders. The sample I studied is representative of a small slice of South African youth – but I would argue that this slice is perhaps the most important of all because of the benefits that will accrue to them from their education. But in the context of youth political participation this will only be significant if more youth decide to choose voice over exit and vocalise their opinions rather than withdraw from participation because it appears to get them nowhere or it seems too hard. And it is beyond the scope of the questions I asked to predict whether this will be the case or not.

The youth have not had enough time to be jaded by the political process or to have made up their minds yet. This means that there is still hope, despite the negative sentiment expressed, for them to change: to become better informed and more engaged citizens. It is on this hope that the future of South African democracy rests.

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Appendix A: Research Instruments

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please indicate your response by marking the appropriate option with a cross [X]

How old will you be on Dec 31st 2011?	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Gender	Male				Female		
Race	Asian	Black		Coloured	Indian		White
Level of Study	1st	2nd	3rd	Honours	Masters		Ph.D.
Field of Study							

SECTION A

The following questions relate to politics in South Africa. Please mark your answer with a [X].

1. Can you name the following Ministers?

(a). The Minister for Basic Education	Naledi Pandor	Blade Nzimande	Angie Motshekga
(b). The Minister for Health	Barbara Hogan	Aaron Motsoaledi	Baleka Mbete
(c). The Minister for Finance	Trevor Manuel	Pravin Gordhan	Gwede Mantashe

2. Can you name the leaders of the following political parties?

(a). The leader of the ANC	Julius Malema	Jacob Zuma	Kgalema Motlanthe
(b). The leader of the DA	Patricia de Lille	Tony Leon	Helen Zille
(c). The leader of the IFP	Mangosuthu Buthulezi	Rev. Musa Zondi	Zanele Magwaza-Msibi

3. Do you know who your ward councillor is?	Yes	No
(a). If you answered yes, what is their name and party?		

4. What does the state President do?	

5. Are the following statements true or false?

Teachers in public schools are paid for by the state	True	False
Salaries for government workers are paid for by the ANC	True	False
Roads are built by the party in charge of government	True	False

6. What does it mean when a party has a two-thirds majority in parliament?

Parliament is hung	The party can amend the Constitution	The party can dissolve parliament and call for new elections

7. Members of parliament are chosen from a list. Who decides which candidates will get on the list?

The voters	The party bosses	Local committees or branches of the political party

8. Who are the ANC's alliance partners?	

9. Public policy in South Africa is designed and implemented by the:	Legislature	Executive	Judiciary

10. Which interest group took the government to court over the provision of free medicines to patients with HIV/AIDS?	HRC	TAC	HPCSA

11. Which southern African country did South Africa provide a R2.4 Billion bailout to?	

12. What does the acronym SADC stand for?	

SECTION B

The following questions relate to politics in South Africa. Please mark your answer with a [X] and explain your response in the space provided.

1. Do you think the Ministers in charge of government do a good job?	Yes	No
(a). Please explain why		

2. What kind of situation do you think would force you to seek the help of your local councillor?

3. Are you proud to be called a South African?	Yes	No
(a). Please explain why you feel this way		

4. Did you vote in the last national and provincial election?	Yes		No	
(a). If you answered yes, which of the following statements comes closest to describing your feelings when you when you cast your ballot?	I get a feeling of satisfaction out of it	I do it only because it is my duty	I feel annoyed, it is a waste of my time	I don't feel anything in particular.
(b). If you answered no, was it because:	You were not of age to vote	You wanted to vote but were not able	You did not think your vote would change anything	Other
(c). If answered other, please explain:				

5. Did you vote in the last local government election?	Yes		No	
(a). If you answered no, was it because:	You were not of age to vote	You wanted to vote but were not able	You did not think your vote would change anything	Other
(b). If you answered other, please explain:				

6. Do you think the government is working hard to make the country a better place for you and your family?	Yes	No
(a). Please explain your answer		

7. Thinking about the national government, how much effect do you think its activities, the laws passed and so on, have on your day-to-day life? Do they have:	A great effect	Some effect	None
(a). Please explain why			

8. Do you follow public affairs in the media?	Yes		No	
(a). If you answered yes, please indicate the media you use. You may select more than one. If you answered no, please proceed to question 9.	Newspapers	Radio	Television	Internet
(b). How often do you do this?	Every day	About once a week	From time to time	

9. Suppose there was some question you had to take to a government office – for example a tax or housing regulation. Do you think you would be given equal treatment? Would you be treated as well as anyone else?	Yes		No	
(a). Please explain why				
(b). If you explained your point of view to the officials in the situation described in question 10, what effect do you think it would have?	They would give my point of view serious consideration	They would pay only a little attention	They would ignore what I had to say	
(c).Please explain why				

10. Would you say that you are interested in the activities of political parties and interest groups?	Yes		No	
(a). Please explain why				

11. Do you participate in extra-curricular activities? Such as the Rotary Club or RAG, ratepayers associations, street committees, youth organisations?	Yes	No
(a). If yes, which ones:		
(b). If no, why not?		
12. Do you discuss public affairs and political scandals with other people?	Yes	No
(a). If you answered, yes, who do you discuss it with? Are there some people with whom you would not?		
(b). If you answered no, why not?		

13. In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing South Africa today?		
(a). Do you think the government is doing enough to address these challenges?	Yes	No
(b). Please explain why		
(c) In your opinion, what would be the best policies to deal with what you think are the biggest challenges facing South Africa today?		

14. Do you feel like living in South Africa is more like being under a dictatorship, or a democracy?	Democracy	Dictatorship
(a). Please explain why		

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH AND DECLARATION OF INFORMED CONSENT

SECTION A: DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH

Title of Study: Citizens or Subjects? A study of the political culture of students at UKZN, Howard College

Outline of study:
According to research, it as young adults that people become politically active and develop the attitudes that will influence their future participation in the political system. It is the aim of this study to investigate the attitudes and feelings of students toward the South African political system and their knowledge of that system and to consider how that might impact upon democracy.

Study to be conducted by: Jiovaan Chetty

Purpose of study: The study is a research project that is being undertaken for academic purposes and forms a part of the requirements for a Masters Degree in Political Science at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

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Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any stage and for any reason. You have the right to request that your participation in the study and the information that you provide remains anonymous. This means that I will not use your name in my study and I shall ensure that in writing up the study you cannot be individually linked to any information that I present or write. Written or audio records will be kept in a secure environment, disclosed only to my supervisor who will maintain the anonymity that I guarantee.

SECTION B: DECLARATION

I……………………………………………………………………(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the nature of the research project and the conditions of my participation (as explained above), and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, for any reason, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   **DATE**

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